THE PERPETUAL CHALLENGES OF NONPROFIT BOARD GOVERNANCE

AND ITS' IMPACT ON OPERATIONS

by

Gala Harvell

Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) exist to provide societal benefits to the community and improve the quality of life. The chief executive officers (CEO) or executive directors (ED) are the executive leaders who ensure the organization follows the strategic direction the board of directors developed. The directors have a fiduciary responsibility to the organization and stakeholders to provide financial oversight, strategic management, and guidance on policies and procedures. Ensuring effective board governance occurs requires members to understand their roles and responsibilities as directors. This qualitative constructivism study included determining the effects of board governance on operations. The participants comprised two groups: (1) CEOs and EDs and (2) board directors from NPOs in the Hampton Roads area. Data included semi-structured interviews and a confidential, encrypted survey. Four themes emerged from each group of participants. The CEO and EDs themes discovered were working board, efficacy elements, values that create positive outcomes, and theories contributing to success. Themes discovered from the board directors' interview actions that hinder success, governance, chair effects, and efficacy elements. The findings revealed that training, communication, and trust enhanced board governance. Understanding roles and responsibilities and the chair setting the tone for the board impacted governance. General board practices to improve include strategic management, financial management, communication, and training. Recommendations for further study include using the quantitative methodology to expand the research on the chair effects on the board, roles, and responsibilities of the board, and identifying elements for efficacy. Leveraging requires determining recruitment strategies, implementing communication strategies, and ongoing training for board members.

Keywords: board governance, board directors, governance, efficacy elements

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Approvals

Gala Harvell	4/18/2024
Gala Harvell, Doctoral Candidate	Date
Dr. Mary Jo Odom-Dull	4/18/2024
Dr. Mary Jo Odom-Dull, Dissertation Chair	Date
Dr. Tim Anderson	4/19/2024
Dr. Tim Anderson, Committee Member	Date
Alexander Averin	June 3, 2024
Alexander Averin, PhD, MBA Chair, Doctoral Programs	Date

Dedication

To God be the glory for all He has done, all He is doing, and all He will do. I am grateful that

God allowed me to take this journey. At the age of seven, I gave my life to Christ, and there has

not been a day that I have regretted the decision. He has been my source of strength, provider,

and Heavenly Father. With God as my driver, I knew this journey would be challenging but not

impossible. I would be remiss if I did not take the time to dedicate this dissertation to my parents,

Clyde and Gwendolyn Moody, resting in their Heavenly home. My parents always encouraged

me to work hard and strive for academic excellence. I am confident that they were right there

with me during the journey, pushing me to finish. Mom and Dad, this is for you. Thank you for

being the best parents and instilling the values conducive to living a Christian life.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I give all honor to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Without Him, I could not have accomplished this task. He provided everything I needed to ensure I would be successful. Even during the challenges, He whispered to me to persevere. I also want to acknowledge my wonderful husband, Floyd D. Harvell, who has been my number one supporter throughout my educational journey. God sent Him to me for many reasons, but most importantly, he was sent to stand in the gap for my parents. I also want to acknowledge my family and friends, who have supported and encouraged me. I also want to acknowledge my siblings, my brother, Orlando Moody, and my little sister, Charlene Youell, for their support. Unfortunately, I do not want to list any additional names because I do not want to omit anyone. Nonetheless, I to thank my mentor, Edith G. White, who introduced me to nonprofits. Through volunteering, she opened my eyes to another sector of business that aligned with my spiritual gifts and passion for giving. I also want to acknowledge Dr. Timothy Anderson, Dr. Nicole Lowes, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and my former professors at Liberty University. Thank you for the feedback and advice. Finally, I want to thank my chair, a phenomenal person who became my spiritual mentor. She encouraged me, provided constructive feedback, and pushed me to stay on the course. Thank you, Dr. MJ. You will never know the impact you have made on my life.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Nonprofit organizations include a societal benefit that answers a humanitarian need and improves the quality of life for the community. Unlike for-profit organization leaders, nonprofit leaders do not seek to create income and pursue charitable missions (Chen & Chen-Yang, 2018). The board of directors is at the helm of a nonprofit organization and has a fiduciary responsibility to the organization and stakeholders to ensure the objectives and mission succeed (Piscitelli et al., 2020). The board members provide strategic direction that will allow sustainability by providing board governance, including financial oversight, strategy formulation, monitoring strategy, strategic planning, and evaluation and control (Dmitry et al., 2021).

However, directors who lack board training, experience, and knowledge can hinder effective governance. Freiwirth (2017) proposed that a significant complaint of executive leaders is board dysfunction. Board directors without governance experience and who do not understand their roles struggle with their functions, causing perpetual challenges for the board (Mason & Kim, 2020). The problem was that perpetual challenges of board governance could impact internal operations and negatively affect the organization's performance, which posed a problem for the organization (Mason & Kim, 2020).

The foundation of this study included a comprehensive overview of nonprofit board governance and its' impact on operations. The study consisted of a synopsis of ineffective board governance and the purpose of studying the problem. Using a constructivist and qualitative approach, a flexible case study design method with triangulation was used. The conceptual framework mapped existing literature to the topic and consisted of concepts, leadership theories, actors, and constructs. The study revealed a list of assumptions, limitations, and delimitations that could potentially affect the outcome. However, risk mitigation strategies to mitigate

potential threats were prevalent in the study. An outline for the literature review to connect existing literature to the study was prevalent.

Background of the Problem

As the world evolves and technology changes, nonprofit organizations must integrate new processes to remain sustainable. Rosnerova and Hraskova (2020) proposed that internal processes determine the success of nonprofit organizations. Board directors must set strategic direction and goals to achieve the mission and vision (Piscitelli et al., 2020). However, researchers suggest that board directors often lack the knowledge of board governance and an understanding of their roles (Mason & Kim, 2020). The problem results in challenges for internal operations. The board is instrumental in ensuring the organization achieves its goals and accountability occurs.

Effective board governance is critical to the success of nonprofit organizations. Jaskyte (2018) posited that the lack of board governance and board cohesiveness has negatively affected organizational outcomes. However, additional training and better recruitment could transform how nonprofits govern (Freiwirth, 2017). Board directors with training and experience are more productive. Research results show that highly effective organizations have proactive and interactive boards open to dialogue and debate (Jaskyte, 2018).

Organizations that neglect to address board governance problems may hinder organizational growth. Piscitelli et al. (2020) argued that failing to address board issues could affect funding and sustainability. Executive leaders without strategic directions cannot effectively convey the mission of the organization or influence staff to achieve the objectives. Weisberg (2019) asserted that funders use impact measurements to intensify accountability and measure. Executive leaders must have a strategic plan to know and understand the organization's

direction. Without direction, nonprofit leaders fail to accomplish the organization's mission. Neglecting to address recurring board issues can affect survivability and potential funding (Weisberg, 2019). This study discussed how board governance impacts nonprofit organizations' internal operations.

Problem Statement

The general problem addressed was the lack of effective board governance, which resulted in operational challenges. Zollo et al. (2019) asserted that underperforming boards affect organizational outcomes and effectiveness. The board of directors is responsible for acting in the organization's best interest (Piscitelli et al., 2020). However, board dysfunction was a common complaint among executive leaders that caused operational issues (Freiwirth, 2017). According to Jaskyte (2018), the incoherence of board directors hinders organizational outcomes. Moreover, board challenges also affect the roles of management and leadership. The specific problem addressed was the potential lack of board governance within the nonprofit industry in Hampton Roads, which results in potential operational challenges.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this flexible design single case study was to expand the research about the problems nonprofit organizations experience when board directors are ineffective. The study explored the driving factors in successful board governance and whether a link exists between board experience and effectiveness. The more significant problem of board governance in the nonprofit industry was through an in-depth study of board governance and its effect on operations and sustainability in the Hampton Roads area nonprofit organizations. The study included evaluating the impact the board chair's leadership had on board governance and examined the elements necessary to ensure the success of leaders and managers.

Research Questions

As resignations affect the job market, organization leaders search for strategies to continue operating with few staff (West, 2022). The devastating impact of the pandemic continues to evolve, and nonprofit organizations continue to provide services and help the vulnerable (Akingbola, 2020). Effective board governance ensures that organizations maintain operations and that executive leaders have strategic direction.

Determining the research questions required identifying the management dilemma, also known as the problem, which affected progression or hindered growth. The dilemma for this research was that ineffective board governance impacted nonprofit organizations' operations (Zollo et al., 2019). Although many dilemmas could exist in an organization, narrowing the main issue was complex. However, the primary problem was that the perpetual challenges with board governance could impede success (Jaskyte, 2018). The research questions assisted with determining how specific actions or behaviors affect governance. Also identified in the study were the primary challenges for managers and leaders with ineffective boards and the board chair's leadership on governance.

> **RQ1**. How do the roles and responsibilities of the board impact internal operations?
>
> **RQ.1. a.** What board director actions or behaviors contributed to the success of board governance?
>
> **RQ.1. b.** What board director actions or behavior contributed to the failure of board governance?
>
> **Zollo et al.** (2019) asserted that literature about nonprofit governance stresses the

importance of governance and proposed that its performance measures the efficiency of an organization. Well-performing boards can affect an organization's outcome and overall function

(Zollo et al., 2019). Research linked board governance to organizational effectiveness (Zollo et al., 2019). Neglecting to fulfill the board's responsibilities can result in poor performance of internal operations and a potential decrease in funding. According to Zollo et al. (2019), the board has three primary roles: strategy and policymaking, stewardship, external relationships, and accountability.

Board chairs must intentionally select board directors with character and experience (Seijts et al., 2019). Many characteristics of board directors exist, including directors who exhibit humility, avoid tunnel vision, and can listen and learn from others to help organizations move forward. Additionally, board directors knowledgeable about decision-making and committed to acting are essential for governance. Decisions cannot occur because of ambiguous and insufficient information. Zollo et al. (2019) stated that board directors must understand their roles and responsibilities.

RQ 2. How does the lack of board governance affect leadership and management roles?

RQ.2. a. What are the primary challenges for leaders and managers with inadequate boards?

RQ.2. b. What board elements are beneficial to ensure the success of leaders and managers?

Puyvelde et al. (2018) noted that the board's perceptions and decisions can impact relationships with internal and external stakeholders and influence organizational strategies. Identifying measurable goals and tracking progress towards the goals requires organizations to integrate strategies essential to internal and external stakeholders. Nahum and Carneli (2019) suggested that boards actively engaged in strategic decision-making can positively influence the

organization's performance and direction. Inadequate boards can change the dynamics of the organization, disrupting programs and causing difficulties in obtaining funding.

Board directors who listen attentively, contribute perspectives to issues, and develop each other's weaknesses are more productive, providing direction for the leaders and organization (Puyvelde et al., 2018). In addition, decision-making was a primary role of the board; however, when the directors based their decisions on incorrect information, issues could occur. Directors who receive accurate information can make informed decisions critical to executive leaders (Puyvelde et al., 2018).

RQ 3. What effect does the board chair leadership have on board governance?

The role of the board chair remains crucial in nonprofit organizations. The chair considerably influences the board's functioning and is the gatekeeper (Freiwirth, 2017). The board chair connected the board directors to internal and external stakeholders. Puyvelde et al. (2018) proposed that board members' perceptions suggested that board chairs affect the chief executive officer (CEO), board, and organization. To ensure quality decision-making occurs within the process, the board chair must create a board environment conducive to the board's engagement (Puyvelde et al., 2018).

Board chairs must also receive training and know the aspects of board governance to ensure the board sets a broad direction for the organization, is efficient and organized, and integrates quality decision-making (Puyvelde et al., 2018). The goal was to help organizations become sustainable. Contrary to research, except for three organizations, the nonprofits in the study did not struggle with board governance. Even the organizations experiencing board issues were able to continue accomplishing the goals.

Nature of the Study

Each aspect of the research project was significant; however, the nature of the study provided a synopsis of the study and the data collection method. The nature of the study included a description of the paradigm, design, method, and triangulation when using flexible designs. The paradigm integrated a group of beliefs that functioned as the primary philosophies reflecting a particular position within the world, including the potential relationships and their parts (Bogna et al., 2020). Some scholars proposed paradigms are tools researchers use for the research process (Sultana et al., 2019).

The design type depends on the study and can include fixed, flexible, or mixed. Researchers determine the basis of the method for the study, which is the design type. For example, qualitative flexible designs could include a phenomenological or case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, quantitative fixed designs include experimental, quasi-experimental, or nonexperimental methods. A mixed research method consists of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. However, triangulation allowed the researcher to integrate several methods within the design type (Yin, 2018).

Discussion of Research Paradigms

Bogna et al. (2020) posited a paradigm comprised of a system of beliefs or a worldview that provides directions for determining the choices of the research method, ontologically and epistemologically. Two fundamental philosophies differentiate a paradigm: ontology and epistemology (Sultana et al., 2019). The natural way of seeing reality comprises ontology; however, the theory of knowledge consists of epistemology (Sultana et al., 2019). Researchers in a particular paradigm view the world a certain way: positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, or pragmatism (Bogna et al., 2019).

Positivism

Sultana et al. (2019) asserted that positivist paradigms align with the rules of natural science. Positivism includes a quantitative approach to test a theory by developing different hypotheses using statistical tests to discover the answer (Sultana et al., 2019). The ontological view of positivism proposed that reality existed but epistemologically suggested that the generalization of knowledge exists (Sultana et al., 2019). The advantage of using this paradigm was the ability to gather accurate data through trial methods with varying outcomes, which allowed the researcher to generalize based on results from scientific techniques (Sultana et al., 2019). The major disadvantage of the positivism proposed is that the researcher cannot capture social phenomena, and studying human beings using methods of natural science is impossible (Sultana et al., 2019).

Post- Positivism

Post-positivism paradigm procedures are deductive, and the researcher can be aware of the reality they cannot capture (Sultana et al., 2019)—knowledge of post-positivism forms probabilistic law (Sultana et al., 2019). Like positivism, data was objective and accurate; however, the phenomena were unfavorable, which required further investigation. The research could present a biased view based on the investigator's perspective, a disadvantage of post-positivism because of the lack of specific results (Sultana et al., 2019). The ontological argument of post-positivism was like positivism, suggesting that reality was single and easily observed.

Constructivism

Constructivists sought to understand the social world and consider knowledge a social construct (Bogna et al., 2020). This analogy resulted from individuals interacting and their exchanges within a particular setting. Constructivists also relied heavily on recorded and

collected data through interviews and observations. Individuals can influence the worldview of a constructivist within a group or pervasive individuals without the influence of a group (Bogna et al., 2020). My goal for this study was to obtain the participant's view of a situation. From the participant's responses, I developed a theory and formulated a pattern for the study.

Discussion of Design

Fixed Method

Robson and McCartan (2016) posited that using fixed methods requires a well-articulated theory. The researcher must have substantial knowledge of the phenomenon. Driven by theory, fixed designs require quantitative methods and precise procedures (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Researchers can conduct a mini-pilot study before the final research to sort technical matters with data collection. In addition, researchers must detach from the design to avoid affecting the findings with biases (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Fixed designs include experimental, quasi-experimental, and nonexperimental design methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Flexible Method

Although flexible designs include several methods, case studies, grounded theory, and ethnographies are the most popular (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This qualitative method requires specific skills and qualities; the researcher is a great listener, adaptive, flexible, and lacking bias. Integrating specific skills, such as being a great listener, is essential to understanding the issues because researchers ask questions (Robson & McCartan, 2016). With flexible designs, new problems can arise; therefore, researchers are sensitive and responsive to contradictory evidence. Researchers also incorporate multiple data collection techniques and a rigorous approach. This design method was appropriate for the study.

Mixed Methods

Mixed methods include multi-strategy designs and integrate flexible and fixed designs. Using a multi-strategy design can raise practical and theoretical issues with the research (Robson & McCartan, 2016). However, using two methods in qualitative research is uncommon. Evidence suggests that using quantitative and qualitative designs is not possible because different paradigms exist for the two (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Researchers understand the analogy as the incompatibility thesis, which proposes that two studies do not have the same phenomena; therefore, combining the two methods would not be unfeasible (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Mitchell (2018) proposed a mixed-method approach that uses a single study to answer questions about the nature of a phenomenon from a participant's perspective. The mixed method can also reveal the relationship between measurable variables. Mitchell (2018) argued that mixed methods are not a replacement for quantitative and qualitative research; instead, they are an extension of the study.

Discussion of Method

Phenomenology

Towers et al. (2020) asserted that phenomenology methods reflect on a person's lived experience and the bond between that individual and their environment. The researcher investigates the lived experiences of people involved in the study to formulate the source of human actions and behavior (Towers et al., 2020). This method involves a deeper understanding of a phenomenon several individuals may experience. Creswell and Poth (2018) proposed a phenomenologist search for what individuals may have in common while experiencing a phenomenon. The downside of the method is that it involves finding individuals who experience the same phenomena, which can occur complexly. Researchers must understand philosophical

assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This method includes understanding the human interpretation of the world.

Case Study

Case studies have an extensive and distinguished history that extends across disciplines. Creswell and Poth (2018) posited that case study research consists of what the researcher will study and involves a single bounded system or multiple systems within a particular real-life setting. The study includes a community, an organization, or a small group. In addition, the study comprises an individual or a specific decision process. Creswell and Poth (2018) identified three types of case studies: instrumental, intrinsic, and collective. The instrumental study includes a single case study that focuses on an issue or concern and selects a single case to analyze using a research question. An intrinsic study focuses on the case and presents a unique or usual situation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The collective study encompasses multiple case studies, in which researchers select several cases to illustrate the issue or concern. The collective research reflects different perspectives on the same issue (Yin, 2018).

Researcher's Method

This study included a single case study as the method. The study included multiple sources, so this was the best approach. Creswell and Poth (2018) posited that data collection involves several sources, such as observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and reports. Therefore, the case study approach was appropriate, and data came from interviews and surveys to prove that the perpetual challenges of board governance impact operations. The case study was the most logical choice because phenomenology focuses on finding the commonality of individuals and phenomena.

Discussion of Triangulation

Data triangulation consisted of interviews, case studies, and surveys, the method of choice for triangulation and data collection in this research concept. Rose and Johnson (2020) proposed that triangulation involves using multiple sources to gather evidence. Yin (2018) supported this argument by suggesting that using various sources of evidence was the rationale for triangulation. Another rationale for numerous sources was the ability to conduct an in-depth study of real-world contexts (Yin, 2018). In-depth and contextual studies allow the researcher to gather several sources over time. Additionally, researchers can locate the phenomenon more accurately and clearly when addressing data from multiple directions. The researcher will integrate convergent evidence, which helps strengthen the validity of the constructs in the case study (Yin, 2018).

Summary of the Nature of the Study

The nature of the study provided a descriptive review of the sampled research study and the data collection process. In addition, the nature of the study included the research design, method, and triangulation. The study included a constructivist approach with a flexible design to answer the research questions. The constructivism paradigm helped develop theories and explored how board experience and training shaped board governance. Data triangulation for the study included interviews, case studies, and surveys to ensure multiple sources were in the study. Convergent evidence strengthened the validity of the constructs. Incorporating changes did not impact the study because the design was flexible.

<div align="center">

Conceptual Framework

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Robson and McCartan (2016) proposed that a conceptual framework explains the research study in a narrative or graphical form. The purpose of this conceptual framework was to map existing literature to the researcher's topic (Antunes et al., 2021). The framework (See

Figure 1) comprised several elements, including concepts, theories, and actors. Additionally,

constructs were elements in the framework that helped explain the research. Qualitative

researchers use constructs to represent concepts and relationships between the elements;

however, quantitative research uses variables to show the correlation of elements in the

framework (Antunes et al., 2021). Constructs existed in the study because this research study

was qualitative. In a diagram format, this research's conceptual framework (See Figure 1)

showed the connection between board governance and internal operations. The diagram (See

Figure 1) depicted how the elements in the framework correlated to the outcome.
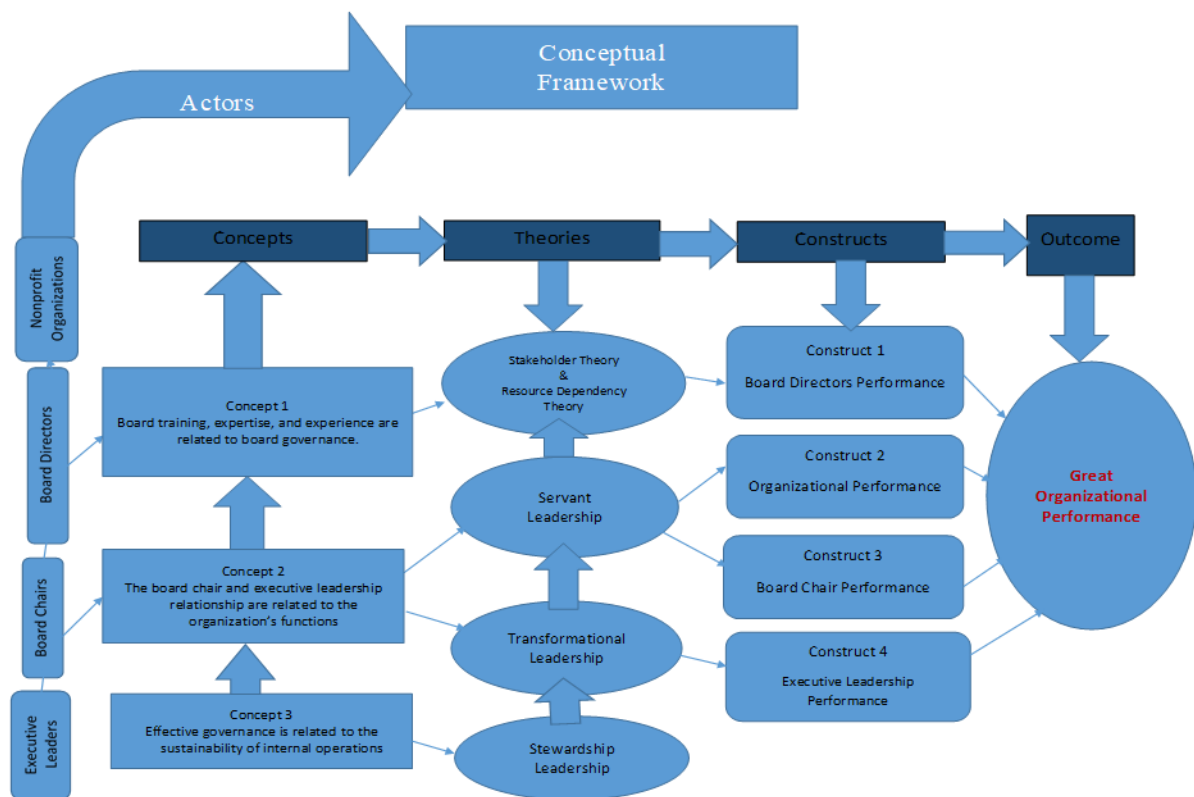
Figure 1. Relationships between concepts.

Concepts

Figure 1 consisted of three concepts: the actors, theories, and constructs leading to effective board governance and organizational performance. Concept 1 board training, expertise, and experience related to board governance. Roshayani et al. (2018) proposed that experience, training, and expertise can determine the board director's performance. The actors (board directors) link to concept 1, stakeholder resource dependency theory, and the board director's performance. This impacted obtaining critical resources necessary for the organization, effective board governance, and the organization's performance (Sultana et al., 2019).

Figure 1 also shows concept 2, the relationship between the board chair and executive leadership, as related to the organization's function. Concept 2 linked the actors, board chairs, and executive leaders to servant leadership theory and transformational theory and linked those theories to constructs 2, organizational performance, and 3, executive leadership performance. According to Nahum and Carneli (2019), the leadership style of board chairs impacts chair performance and executive leaders. Board chairs that practice servant leadership can lead executives, engage directors, and achieve effective board governance. Executive leaders who practice transformational leadership influence and encourage staff, which enhances organizational performance (Nahum & Carneli, 2020). Transformational leadership links to the performance of executive leadership.

Additionally, Figure 1 illustrates concept 3, effective board governance, which relates to the sustainability of internal operations. Carroll et al. (2017) asserted that board directors emulating the stewardship theory work on behalf of all stakeholders instead of personal interest. Concept 3 linked the actors, executive leaders, board chairs, directors, and nonprofit organizations to each leadership theory. The theories include stewardship, transformational,

servant, stakeholder, and resource dependency. The related constructs include the board

director's performance, organizational performance, board chair's performance, and executive

leadership performance. These links suggested that the elements in the conceptual framework

affected board governance and organizational performance.

Concept 1

Board Training, Expertise, and Experience are Related to Board Governance.

According to Roshayani et al. (2018), board director experience sets the strategic and operational

direction of the organization that contributes to sustainability. However, many directors lack a

clear understanding of their obligations (Roshayani et al., 2018). Experienced board directors are

more effective in governing the organization. However, the study revealed that board experience

was unnecessary for many boards. Researchers indicated that board directors with inadequate

training who do not understand the organization cannot govern effectively (Roshayani et al.,

2018). The study findings revealed that a lack of training can impact governance.

Concept 2

The Board Chair and Executive Leader Relationship are Related to the

Organization's Function.

Mathews (2019) posited that the relationship between the board chair and executive

leader affects how the organization functions, which is critical to strategic operations. However,

Mathews (2019) suggested that the board chair and executive leaders do not understand their

roles in nonprofit organizations. The organization's effectiveness requires clarifying the role of

the board chair and executive leadership (Mathews, 2019). Organizational performance weakens

during attempts to reduce the ambiguous dyadic role of the board chair and executive leader

(Mathews, 2019).

Concept 3

Effective Board Governance is Related to the Sustainability of the Operation.

Board governance research suggests that organizations that perform well relate to board effectiveness (Ihrke & Ford, 2017). The study results found this statement accurate in several of the organizations. However, the lack of practical board governance impacts an organization's performance (Ihrke & Ford, 2017). This information can also be accurate depending on the executive leader. In the study, several executive leaders had board issues, but only one allowed the problem to affect the organization's performance. Although the board sets the strategic direction in nonprofit organizations, nonprofit sustainability becomes difficult when boards are ineffective (Ihrke & Ford, 2017). In some instances, sustainability can become questionable with ineffective boards; however, the study results revealed that executive leaders with transformational leadership skills motivate followers to accomplish the goals despite board issues.

Theories

Conducting qualitative research required integrating theories to understand the dynamics of the study. Five potential theories emerged for the research: transformational, servant, stewardship, resource dependency, and stakeholder. Each theory aligned with the concepts, actors, and constructs to prove that the perpetual challenges of board governance can impact internal operations.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Xie (2020) suggested that transformational leadership theory includes motivating followers by enabling them to accomplish the objective and focus on the goals. Leaders who do not exemplify this style have challenges influencing and engaging workers. According to

Mohammed and Kundi (2020), experimental research indicates that transformational leadership benefits members of the organization. The study findings revealed that transformational leadership theory is critical to executive leadership.

Servant Leadership Theory

Servant leadership includes leaders who work together to achieve a goal without power but with authority (Pearse, 2017). Executive leaders not empowered to lead have difficulties accomplishing the organization's goals. Pearse (2017) posited that servant leadership is better for organizational performance. The findings revealed that organizations with executive leaders who integrated servant leadership performed better. Leaders articulated the goal to staff and empowered them to make certain decisions. However, servant leadership can be complex in hierarchal and centralized structures because, in many instances, leaders cannot act at their discretion (Kim & Mason, 2020). Although many executive leaders interviewed in the study could make certain decisions, a few required the board's approval.

Stewardship Theory

Stewardship theory was more aligned with board directors and governance. Stewardship assumes management acts in the organization's best interest instead of self (Keay, 2017). Board directors who are self-serving hinder governance, thereby impeding organizational growth. Board directors practicing stewardship theory are meticulous about accomplishing the organization's goals. Additionally, stewardship theory seeks to explain the role and behavior of the board in achieving the organization's objectives (Keay, 2017). Several of the organizations had board members who were passionate about the organization's mission and decided to serve because of the mission. The members cared more about achieving the organization's goals than personal interests.

Resource Dependency Theory

Resource dependency theory focuses on the board's ability to work with the external environment to ensure access to critical resources (Madhani, 2017). Directors must connect with external resources to assist the organization in accomplishing its mission. The study findings revealed that several boards and members had access to critical external resources that benefited the organization. A perpetual challenge of board governance was the board's inability to connect to resources. However, Madhani (2017) stated that maximizing performance required board directors to link to essential resources.

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory includes the assumption that organizational leaders have obligations beyond fiduciary responsibilities to ensure the needs and demands of all stakeholders for survival and success (Whitney & Thomas, 2019). Stakeholders exert considerable pressure regarding the role of board directors in strategy (Whitney & Thams, 2019). Research also suggested that stakeholders hold boards responsible for the organization's sustainability (Whitney & Thams, 2019). The study included a proposed link between internal operations and stakeholder theory.

Actors

Conducting the research required identifying significant actors in the research process. The actors represented research elements that affect nonprofit organizations and performance. The actors for this concept included board directors, board chairs, executive leaders, and nonprofit organizations. No additional factors were necessary for the study.

Board Directors

Board directors make up the board in nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Stewart (2017) asserted that ineffective directors hinder board governance and the organization's

strategy. Board directors have a responsibility to provide strategic direction to the organization. Nonprofit organizations' heterogeneous mission and purpose have significant governance consequences, suggesting ineffective boards can hinder progression (Willems et al., 2017). A board comprising ten members participated in the study.

Board Chairs

Board chairs are an essential part of the board and often have an unrealistic view of the board and its effect on governance (Freiwirth., 2017). Board chairs are instrumental in leading the directors and ensuring executives know their roles and responsibilities. However, the unrealistic view can cause the board to fail to meet its fiduciary duties (Puyvelde et al., 2018). The board chair sets the tone for board culture in addition to being the gatekeeper (Freiwirth et al., 2018). The findings identified the board chair as the gatekeeper that sets the tone for board governance. The board chair ensured members adhered to the board's roles, responsibilities, and bylaws.

Executive Leaders

Executive leaders and the board chair relationship are critical to functioning (Freiwirth et al., 2018). Leaders are responsible for day-to-day operations; executive leaders influence organizational results (Banzato & Julio Cesar, 2016). Executive leaders lacking guidance and board director support can experience challenges in fulfilling their responsibilities. Although the findings revealed that several executive leaders experienced issues with the board because of their passion for fulfilling the mission, they continued to work diligently to ensure the organization achieved its goals.

Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit leaders must demonstrate their effective and efficient capabilities by strategizing, governing, and safeguarding assets through the guidance of the board of directors (Roshayani et al., 2018). Nonprofit leaders must have a strategic plan to ensure goals succeed. The study results revealed that many leaders had strategic plans, but a shift in operations occurred because of COVID-19, and revision of the plans did not occur. In addition, the research cognate was nonprofit leadership and management; therefore, focusing on nonprofit organizations allowed the study and proposed additional research for further studies.

Constructs

Developing the correct constructs is critical for qualitative research because criticism about case study researchers has risen (Yin, 2018). Integrating construct validity to ensure accurate operating measures for the concepts was also imperative for research (Yin, 2018). The constructs allowed validation of the research concept. The study consisted of four qualitative constructs: the board director's performance, the board chair's performance, the executive leader's performance, and organizational performance.

Construct 1

The board director's performance can influence board governance. The board director's performance influences the effectiveness and strategies of the board (Van et al., 2018). The first construct is the board director's experience, training, and expertise linked to the board director's performance. The board director's performance linked to stakeholder theory. The study confirmed that board members could influence board governance, and training and expertise are linked to the member's performance. However, experience was not a link; therefore, several organizations did not require incoming board members to have experience.

Construct 2

The board of directors can determine organizational performance. Board directors are responsible for monitoring the organization's costs and goals (Weisberg, 2019). Construct 2: Board governance linked to the organization's performance and stewardship. This analogy was also accurate. The study results revealed that board directors have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure members adhere to the IRS requirements and monitor, control, and protect financial resources. NPOs that performed well had excellent governance practices and acted in the organization's best interest.

Construct 3

The board chair's performance was a critical determinant of the director's participation and contribution to the decision-making process (Kanadlı et al., 2020). Construct 3: The board chair's performance relates to transformational theory. This suggested that the leadership style of the board chair can influence board directors and executive leaders, and the leader motivates followers to accomplish the objective while focusing on the goals, which occurred in the study results. Board members who participated in discussions and attended meetings regularly contributed to the decision-making process.

Construct 4

Executive leadership performance as a servant leader encouraged followers to contribute to the shared core values, which motivated them to excel in their work to promote organizational success (Mohammed & Kundi, 2020). Organizations that achieved the goals had executive leaders who demonstrated servant leadership, which is linked to performance (Pearse, 2017). Construct 4: Executive leadership performance is linked to servant leadership.

Relationships Between Concepts, Theories, Actors, (and) Constructs

Robson and McCartan (2016) proposed a conceptual framework that showed a relationship between the elements, as shown in Figure 1. The framework guided the study and connected the concepts in Figure 1 to the actors, theories, and constructs, showing that each element contributed to the outcome. Concept 1 showed a relationship between board directors and board training, expertise, and experience related to board governance (Roshayani et al., 2018). Organizational members perform better when board directors have training, experience, and expertise in integrating stakeholder and resource dependency theory. However, experience was not a requirement for board directors.

Concept 2 actors comprised the board chairs and executive leadership and their relationship to servant and transformational leadership. Board chairs who exhibit transformational leadership skills enhance their performance and relationships with executive leaders (Nahum & Carneli, 2020). Executive leaders who integrated servant leadership theory also enhanced their performance and relationships with the staff, which helped motivate followers to meet the organization's goals.

Concept 3 included each actor, executive leader, board chair, and board director. This concept suggested that effective governance was related to the sustainability of internal operations. NPOs were the primary actors studied and explored. Stewardship theory proposed that board directors were responsible for all stakeholders, which included executive leaders, board chairs, board directors, and external (Carroll et al., 2017). When the actors incorporated each leadership theory identified in Figure 1, stakeholder, resource dependency, servant, transformational, and stewardship, the performance of board directors, board chairs, executive leadership, and the organization improved. In addition, overall employee performance improved.

Triangulation

According to Robson and McCartan (2016), triangulation includes multiple sources to assist the study. Two forms of triangulation that existed in the study were data and theory. Data allowed several methods to collect data, such as interviews and surveys, to validate the study. Theory triangulation allowed the integration of multiple theories, such as transformational leadership, servant leadership, stewardship, resource dependency, and stakeholder. Collectively, integrating data and theory assists with validating potential threats using triangulation (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Summary of the Research Framework

Defining each element was crucial to the study because the conceptual framework was the study's map and strategy (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The concepts guided the study by explaining the link and relationship between the elements. Multiple theories linked the actors and constructs to the concepts in the study. The actors included board directors, board chairs, executive leaders, and nonprofit organizations. The goal was to show a connection between the framework elements and their effect on board governance and internal operations. The study findings revealed a link between the elements and board governance.

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Definition of Terms

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Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses not within the researcher's control and associated with factors such as the research design, funding and time constraints, and statistical model constraints (Theofanidis & Fountourki, 2018). Limitations imposed restrictions because they are outside the researcher's perimeter and can affect the results, conclusion, and study design (Theofanidis & Fountourki, 2018). For example, limitations may impede the researcher from a

small group of participants, which would not provide an overall scope of responses. The study's limitations were the type of participants and the requirement of two groups. The first participants were ten nonprofit organizations' executive leaders (CEOs and EDs). The second group of participants included a board of directors comprised of ten members with experience ranging from three years to ten or more years in nonprofit board governance.

Delimitations

Delimitations allowed the researcher to consciously set the limitations within their control (Theofanidis & Fountourki, 2018). Definitions set the work boundaries to ensure that achieving the study's objectives and aims was impossible. Developing delimitations aims to provide accomplished goals. Researchers may use constructs, research questions, or the conceptual background as delimitations (Theofanidis & Fountourki, 2018). The research population's limitations are executive leaders comprised of CEOs and EDs from NPOs across the Hampton Roads area and a nonprofit board of directors with a range of experience also in the same area.

Saturation

Saturation occurs when the researcher determines that no additional information can come from participants (Mwita, 2022). The study, which discontinued further data collection because of two data collection methods, reached saturation. Additional information was no longer required or feasible for the study. Saturation can occur by using several data collection methods known as triangulation.

Triangulation

Triangulation uses research methods for data collection (Robson & McCartan, 2016). In triangulation, researchers will use multiple methods, such as focus groups, interviews, and

surveys, which can increase the chance of saturation (Mwita, 2022). Leitch and Chigada (2022) suggest that researchers use triangulation to cross-check data to search for regularities. For the study, triangulation included interviews and surveys. The information was necessary to cross-check the data for accuracy and consistency.

<div style="text-align:center">**Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations**</div>

Boundaries and potential limitations are part of the study, identifying possible weaknesses and scope conditions. Qualitative researchers must integrate the study's likely assumptions, limitations, and delimitations to minimize possible biases and increase credibility and validity. Formulating a study's problem and research questions shapes the assumptions and can influence how the researcher looks for information (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) proposed that assumptions can change over time and identified four types of philosophical assumptions: (a) ontological, (b) epistemological, (c) axiological, and (d) methodological. Each assumption provides a different implication for the study. The assumptions for the study can delay proving that the perpetual challenges of board governance affect operations. Developing risk mitigation can assist in lessening the adverse effects of the assumptions. Two assumptions were made in the study: (a) the findings from the study could contribute to general business practices, and (b) potential application strategies could emerge to leverage the study findings.

Identifying the study's limitations was critical to the research. Limitations of this study can cause misinterpretation of the results. Landgraf (2022) indicated that limitations in the study are circumstances beyond the researcher's control, which can lead to weaknesses. Assumptions can become weaknesses or limitations associated with various factors, such as time constraints, the study design, and potential funding issues (Theofanidis & Fountourki, 2018). The study

limitations included ten executive leaders of NPOs and a board of directors of ten members. However, delimitations consisted of the boundary and scope conditions for the study, which the researcher does control. Theofanidis and Fountourki (2018) asserted that researchers consciously set delimitations to help achieve the study's objectives. Delimitations can impact the outcome or results, causing uncertainty in the research. A discussion of assumptions, limitations, and delimitations and how they can impact the effectiveness of the study occurred in the study.

Assumptions

The first assumption was that participants would respond honestly about the perpetual challenges of nonprofit governance. Creswell and Poth (2018) noted that the constructivist paradigm seeks to understand the world and rely on participants' views. To ensure honesty, the risk mitigation strategy was to provide confidential surveys online and private interviews of all participants. Knowing the data collection process was confidential and trustworthy can increase the participant's honesty. Recording of the interviews occurred in person in a private setting. The surveys occurred online through an application that integrated encryption to ensure the confidentiality of participants. Participants received a confidential password to unlock and complete the survey. Returning encrypted responses was necessary.

An assumption was that board directors' productivity relied on the leadership style of board chairs (Nahum & Carneli, 2020). This assumption posed a risk to the study. The study results revealed that board leadership styles influence board directors' productivity from the surveys and interviews. The conceptual framework, Figure 1 of the study, proposed transformational leadership influenced the board and encouraged engagement. Therefore, the risk mitigation strategy included identifying the leadership style of board chairs with extensive board participation.

Another assumption was that board directors with training and experience are more effective in governing nonprofit organizations. This assumption also poses a risk to the study. Minimizing risk required determining which board participants had board training and experience. Board experience was not a requirement but a benefit for the board. However, training was critical to ensure that members understood their roles and responsibilities. The study included information from participants' responses to the survey and interview process. This assumption pinpointed what criteria were beneficial for effective governance in organizations that perform well (Ihrke & Ford, 2017).

Limitations

Several limitations of the study existed, such as a lack of previous research studies on the topic, time constraints in gathering data, and not having a statistical representation of the population. Additionally, from a constructivist approach, the interpretation of the data could be influenced from a personal perspective (Bogna et al., 2020). Therefore, the risk mitigation for the lack of previous research included searching for additional resources through scholarly databases to identify qualitative studies. The time constraint mitigation included a time management plan that included each task for the data collection and an estimated completion time. The schedule budgeted time for each task tracked the task and factored in rescheduling time. The goal was to complete the task within the time.

Cooper and Schindler (2014) posited that quantitative research measures a study. A large quantitative sample size limits the researcher's control of the study. However, qualitative research does not represent the populations statistically (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). After collecting the data, transcribed and coded coding of the responses occurred to ensure that

information was categorized into limited categories. The risk plan ensured that coding was exact, data was categorized accurately, and no errors occurred in the codebook.

Delimitations

Robson and McCartan (2016) suggested that the scope conditions describe the study's population and whom the study will impact. The timeline of the study was inconclusive as part of the scope condition. The expectation was to complete the study within 90 days using surveys and interviews as data collection methods. Ten executive leaders of NPOs nonprofit organizations and a board of directors comprised ten members of the general population for the study. The delimitations of the study included a selected population of board directors, research questions, and constructs. Nonprofit board directors and executive leaders comprise the population because the problem statement was a lack of effective board governance, resulting in operational challenges,

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Significance of the Study

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Nonprofit organizations are specific and seek to provide public services to the communities where they operate because of their mission, goals, and staff (Bakotić, 2022). The objectives of nonprofits vary based on different factors, such as educational, cultural, economic, health, and religious. The nonprofit sector's is to help people engage in public life by providing services (Bakotić, 2022). By impacting the economy and the community, nonprofits affect people's lives and contribute to society's reform process and modernization (Bakotić, 2022).

In some areas, nonprofits play an instrumental role in helping people solve social problems quicker than official authorities (Bakotić, 2022). Nonprofit organizations are also accountable to stakeholders, including founders, clients, donors, and the public community (Bakotić, 2022). Therefore, the goals are complex and challenging and require effective board

governance to ensure successful organizational performance. Boards that underperform affect the outcomes and effectiveness of the organization (Zollo et al., 2019). The study included proving that the perpetual challenges of board governance affect the organization's performance. The research concept included filling in the scholarly literature gaps by conducting a qualitative study and exploring the relationships between the study results and research that can benefit business practice. Additionally, the study discussed the relationship of board governance to nonprofit leadership and management, specifically the importance of influential leaders with training and experience.

Reduction of Gaps in the Literature

Creswell and Poth (2018) proposed that qualitative research makes the world visible through interpretative practices by transforming the world. Conducting the study required researching articles identical to the study and identifying themes. The type of articles related to the topic and finding those scholarly articles was challenging. Locating the appropriate information was intentional and purposeful. Although numerous articles existed about corporate board governance, challenges occurred in locating research literature on nonprofit board governance, particularly the impact on operations. Therefore, the study was necessary to fill the gaps by adding to the existing literature about nonprofit board governance and operations. Ihrke and Ford (2017) associated board efficiency with organizations that perform well. Additionally, Ihrke and Ford (2017) suggested a relationship existed between board governance and the organization's performance.

The goal for filling the gaps was to ensure the study comprised interviews and survey questions conducive to the research questions, concepts, and constructs. In addition, the study included triangulation for the data and theory. Triangulation allows multiple data collection

methods and approaches (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Triangulation also assists with validity by countering all potential threats (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Although saturation could pose a problem during the study, no additional information emerged when the data collected was feasible. Mwita (2022) suggested using saturation as a method for data collection, which informs the researcher that all data necessary for the study occurred. No additional information to collect was essential for the study. Controversy exists in research regarding the saturation process, and the topic remains relevant in qualitative studies (Mwita, 2022). The study included approaches to ensure the study links to existing literature. Google Scholar and Liberty's Library were databases to search for articles that bridged the gap between the research and existing literature.

Implications for Biblical Integration

Biblical principles are essential in all leadership aspects, and God expects leaders to fulfill their responsibilities and duties. The concepts and theories of the study aligned with the principles of Godly leaders. Colossian 3:23 states, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not human masters" (Bible Gateway, New International Version, Colo. 3:23, n/d). God expects humankind to work diligently as if he is their employer, not man. Concept 1 denoted that effective board leadership requires training, experience, and knowledge about board governance. God speaks on this topic in the book of Timothy, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (Bible Gateway, New International Version, 2 Tim. 2:15, n/d). Being an effective disciple requires studying, hearing the word, and learning through Bible study and Sunday school.

The relationship between the board chair and executive leadership relates to the organization's function, which was concept 2. God also talks specifically about individuals

building relationships. Ecclesiastes 4: 9-10 denotes, "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor; if either of them falls, one can help the other up. But pity anyone falls and has no one to help them up" (Bible Gateway, New International Version, Ecclesiastes 4: 9-10, n/d). The relationship between the board chair and executive leaders was critical to the organization's performance. Aboramadan and Khalid (2020) posited that leaders can influence individuals in the organization, thereby influencing followers to behave in a manner that enhances positive organizational outcomes.

Aboramadan and Khalid's (2020) perspective of leaders also applied to concept 3: effective board governance related to the operation's sustainability. Leadership can influence the performance of others and promote positive attitudes, which sustains the organization. This influence was also associated with the great commission, Matthew 19:28, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Bible Gateway, New International Version, Mat. 19:28, n/d). Jesus influenced the disciples to make disciples throughout the land.

Jesus was an example of a leader who exemplifies the study's leadership theories. He used transformational, servant leadership, stewardship, resource dependency, and stakeholder approaches to achieve his mission. For example, transformational leaders motivate followers to accomplish their goals (Xie, 2020). Jesus inspires others to follow him in Luke 9:23, "Then he said to them all: Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Bible Gateway, New International Version, Luk. 9:23, n/d). His motivation encouraged others to deny themselves and follow him.

Numerous stories and scriptures of Jesus being a servant leader exist. Jesus served others through healing, "The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and healed them" (Bible

Gateway, New International Version, Mat. 21:14, n/d). Jesus also exemplifies stewardship and

stakeholder theory by taking responsibility for the sins of the world and dying on the cross;

Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates his loves for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ

died for us" (Bible Gateway, New International Version, Rom. 5:8, n/d). Stewardship theory

proposes that leaders care about the organization's best interest and are not self-serving. Jesus

came to serve others, not to be served (Keay, 2017). Resource dependency theory focuses on the

director's access to critical external resources (Madhani, 2017). Jesus also emulates this

leadership theory by turning two fish and five loaves of bread into multiple fish to feed the

hungry, thus having critical resources to feed everyone.

Benefits to Business Practice and Relationship to Cognate

The study benefits extend beyond the cognate of the study and are essential for nonprofit

leadership and management for several reasons. As the effects of COVID-19 continue to strain

the economy, causing disruptions in several aspects of life, the need for social services and

nonprofit organizations continues to increase (Olawoye-Mann, 2021). For-profit organizations

and nonprofit staff experienced the negative impact of COVID-19. Organizations must find ways

to continue providing services to minimize gaps and keep clients from falling through the cracks

(Olawoye-Mann, 2021). Board governance has always been critical to the success of nonprofits;

however, in today's climate, survivability and sustainability require effective governance

(Olawoye-Mann, 2021). Nonprofits must develop short- and long-term strategies to sustain

themselves, which explains why board governance as a business practice is essential and

beneficial to the cognate.

Sustainability will require leaders to manage their staff, be open to changing strategies,

and adapt to the new world system (Olawoye-Mann, 2021). The significant upsurge in service

demand suggests a need for nonprofit organizations, including effective leadership (Akingbola.,

2020). Sustaining in post-COVID will require board directors with expertise and training to

ensure organizations meet the community's needs. NPO leaders must understand the impact of

board governance to ensure the achievement of goals.

Board governance influences how an organization develops and achieves its objectives.

The strategic direction to ensure the staff understands and accomplishes the mission is set

(Roshayani et al., 2018). The strain on nonprofits causes board directors and executives to

identify opportunities to provide service stability (Akingbola, 2020). The study benefited the

business practices of nonprofit boards, especially during uncertainty and reimagining effective

board governance from the effects of COVID-19. The study related to the cognate provided

evidence of the link between board governance and operations.

Summary of the Significance of the Study

Supporting material to solidify the study was crucial to the overall research concept.

Neglecting to include factual assertions from scholarly sources could potentially invalidate the

study and research. The material to support this study has potential assumptions, limitations, and

delimitations that could impact the study. Assumptions and limitations can pose a risk; several

mitigations were necessary to minimize risk. Delimitation scope conditions included the general

population and the reason for selecting that group.

Integrating a synopsis of the study revealed its significance, including how it bridged the

gaps between the study and current literature. Sufficient evidence existed in research about board

governance. However, the study included demonstrating its impact on internal operations.

Biblical principles and the correlation between the theories and concepts of the study were

necessary. A strong correlation existed between God's expectations of nonprofit leaders, his principles, and the study.

Finally, nonprofit board governance benefits business practices and correlates to the cognate. While many nonprofit organizations exist to serve the community for social or public benefit, during these unprecedented times, sustainability has become an urgent and pressing need for all organizations (Olawoye-Mann, 2021). The need to maintain operations impacts how organizations and boards govern. Therefore, the study was critical to nonprofit leadership, management cognate, and business practice. The perpetual challenges of board governance can impact operations significantly, especially during these turbulent times.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Effective board governance is critical for sustainability in nonprofit organizations. Researchers show a link between organizations that perform well financially and effective boards (Ihrke & Ford, 2017). Leaders must be intentional in the selection process of board directors because underperforming boards can negatively affect organizational outcomes (Zollo et al., 2019). Therefore, board directors must remain productive to achieve the mission and objectives of the organization. In addition, the effects of COVID-19 caused organizational leaders to search for new strategies to sustain (Gamble et al., 2021). Specific business practices are beneficial for success. However, researchers suggest that board directors' lack of training and experience can impede progress (Roshayani et al., 2018). The problem is that ineffective board governance affects organizational performance (Zollo et al., 2019). This literature review will explore scholarly articles that provide insight into board governance. The review will highlight successful and unsuccessful aspects of board governance using supporting and contradictory review journals. The review will include discussions on business practices necessary for

governance, such as board oversight, strategic management, financial management, and board capital. The review will explore the importance of each business practice and its impact on governance by incorporating scholarly literature that discusses the problem of ineffective board governance and its' effect on an organization's success. The review will also discuss good board governance and its effect on the organization's performance. The review will show a correlation between this research concept's concepts, leadership theories, and constructs and how each works together in nonprofit leadership. The literature will incorporate similar studies related to the concept and provide an overview of anticipated and discovered themes while conducting a comprehensive search for academic support. The literature review will summarize each topic in the outline and provide a synopsis of potential further studies.

Business Practices

Governance and Board Oversight

Roshayani et al. (2018) discussed the board director's role in nonprofit organizations by examining the capabilities necessary for board governance. Roshayani et al. defined nonprofit organizations as associations funded by donations and government grants to provide public service and resolve social issues. However, Stewart and Diebold (2017) denoted that nonprofits are organizations governed by a board of directors and managed by directors to achieve a mission. Organizational leaders must manage resources efficiently and effectively, which is the primary responsibility of the board of directors. Although the board of directors has several responsibilities, the primary role is to oversee the organization's internal operations, including finances, and to provide governance to safeguard the assets (Roshayani).

Dula et al. (2020) posited that US law, like many countries worldwide, requires nonprofit organizations to have a governing body with a board of directors, governors, or trustees. In

addition, the board is responsible for supervising the executive director, who manages daily operations (Dula et al., 2020). According to the laws of most countries, the board of directors has a fiduciary responsibility to perform their duties with a specific level of competency to meet public expectations and regulatory standards (Dula et al., 2020).

However, in many nonprofits, some board directors who do not understand their obligations fail to engage in governance (Roshayani et al., 2018). The research proposed using resource-based view theory (RBV) to achieve desired capabilities and suggests that building capabilities for board governance requires competent individuals at different levels (Roshayani et al., 2018). The study included nonprofits in the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia and their business practices. According to Roshayani et al. (2018), the UK Institute of Directors identified a competency framework for effective governance using three dimensions: (a) knowledge, (b) mindset, and (c) skills. Collectively, the dimensions can assist boards in achieving their goals and ensuring the organization accomplishes its mission.

Australia's model focuses on directors having specific skills in four areas: (a) behavioral, (b) technical, (c) industry, and (d) governance (Roshayani et al., 2018). This model came from the Australia Institute of Company Directors (AICD), which identified those areas for effective governance and proposed using them to create a skills matrix for the board of directors (BODs). The AICD suggested using the matrix to assess the BODs' experience, knowledge, and capabilities (Roshayani et al., 2018). Using this assessment can assist in developing BODs who possess the competence for successful board governance. Roshayani et al. (2018) asserted that diverse boards with expertise perform better; however, the opposite can hinder board governance. Effective boards require members with various skill sets, different personalities, and

experiences that will allow them to fulfill their duties and responsibilities (Roshayani et al., 2018).

Mason and Kim (2020) proposed a positive relationship between effective board governance and an organization's performance. Unreliability and bias are typical attitudes and practices of nonprofit boards (Gazley & Nicholson-Crotty, 2018). Evidence from Mason and Kim's research shows that board directors often lack an understanding of their roles, causing executive directors to set the direction of the organizations, not the board (2020). Additionally, Mason and Kim examined agency and stewardship theories on board governance. However, the literature revealed that leadership theories are more thoroughly in the leadership theories section of the review. Mason and Kim developed a conceptual model of a board coaching framework of governance that included the board, orientation content, knowledge, effectiveness, and orientation method, which leads to systematic board support. The researcher argued that board directors need training in effective practices.

Mason and Kim (2020) also conducted a study using surveys and interviews with 394 board members serving 39 organizations comprised of human services, environmental and conservation, arts and culture, education, and social. Using the board coaching framework, the authors integrated three constructs for their study. The constructs were Orientation, supporting and educating new board members, and (2) support (Mason & Kim, 2020). Some survey questions include asking participants about the expectations of a board member, whether they understood the organization's mission statement, and whether there was a method for orienting new board members.

The systematic support for the board included questions such as whether the agenda and meeting minutes are distributed before the meeting, whether the board's expectations are defined,

and whether the board and staff provide board members with adequate education, training, and leadership development to assist in meeting expectations (Mason & Kim, 2020). Mason and Kim used four survey items to assess the board's knowledge and examine the decision-making processes, expectations, and the organization's status.

Additional research on board governance included different approaches for obtaining good governance, such as role-performance relationships (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016). This argument is part of role theory, which suggests good board governance results from how well two or more principal actors or stakeholders support each other (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016). To have good governance, each actor must perform their role effectively, efficiently, and ethically. Bruni-Bossio et al. (2016) integrated the executive director and suggested that governance depended on the ED's relationship with the board. EDs and board directors must have an excellent role-performance relationship to ensure good governance (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016).

Accomplishing the goal of a role relationship requires individuals to perform their roles and involve each other and external stakeholders. Bruni-Bossio et al. (2016) defined roles as the job responsibilities and interdependencies of the role-relationship. However, research includes other factors boards should consider for governance, such as ethics, accountability, and transparency (Santos et al., 2021). Each of these factors could promote good governance and board performance. Researchers also denoted that boards and executive leaders must devote more attention to all the issues and options in organizations to achieve and sustain good board governance (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016).

The research revealed three facets of governance and management that require attention: (a) producing the appropriate organizational structuring, (b) ensuring the alignment of key organizational roles about authority, management, and active functions. In addition, ensuring

those key individuals perform their roles legally, ethically, and effectively (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016). Ensuring efficiency requires understanding the three facets of board performance. However, some scholars explored nonprofits from strategic management; therefore, this discipline was also a business practice necessary for governance.

Strategic Management

Strategic management is increasingly relevant to nonprofits' outlook. The COVID-19 pandemic and the latest economic crises have made nonprofit sustainability difficult (Santos et al., 2021). Miller's (2018) research defined strategic management as integrating strategic planning and implementation to fulfill the mission, meet mandates, and sustain public value. Strategic management assists nonprofit organizations in accomplishing organizational goals and improving communication (Miller, 2018).

Dmitry et al. (2021) noted that board directors must engage in the strategic management process through formulating strategy, monitoring strategy, and implementation. This process also includes strategic planning, evaluation, and control. Self-interested board directors may not contribute to the strategic management process (Dmitry et al., 2021). Researchers suggested that some board directors may undermine the decision-making process and that those directors can become attached emotionally, which causes them to succumb to cognitive entrenchment (Dmitry et al., 2021). The resistance to change occurred when board members refused to integrate the strategies they designed, which was another problem in governance (Dmitry et al., 2021).

Miller (2018) explored how strategic management developed over the years and the importance of board directors integrating processes to ensure nonprofit sustainability and success. Miller also discussed practitioners' and researchers' efforts to create the first comprehensive literature review about strategic management during the 1990s using 65 journal

articles. Years ago, profit leaders used this business practice to respond to resource requirements. However, the practice has become more relevant for survivability and sustainability. For nonprofits, strategic management achieved positive results and assisted the leaders in accomplishing their goals (Miller, 2018).

Santos et al. (2021) viewed strategic management from a value creation viewpoint. Santos et al. (2021) proposed that not enough studies assessed the value creation of this business practice in nonprofit organizations and argued that strategy impacts an organization. A well-crafted and well-executed strategy that evolves rapidly can help organizations remain sustainable (Gamble et al., 2021). Researchers characterize organizational leaders' function as the competence strategy and the ability with which the strategy succeeds (Gamble et al., 2021). Gamble et al. (2021) focused on obtaining a competitive advantage and how the practice can assist organizations with retaining positions in the market. Organizations with a competitive advantage could access critical financial resources more efficiently (An, 2021). Obtaining a competitive advantage could also assist nonprofits in obtaining additional grant funding, specifically government grants (An, 2021).

However, Santos et al. (2021) asserted that context, content, and process are fundamental elements in formulating a strategy and the performance of that strategy. Organizations must address the three elements together to be effective in the implementation process of strategy. Santos et al. (2021) posited that each element serves a purpose in the strategy process; content and process predict the performance of organizations during context and act as a moderating factor. The elements work together to achieve the goals and objectives of the strategy. Santos et al. (2021) argued that strategy formulation directly affects implementation. Organizations must

integrate all aspects of strategic management to ensure the strategic plan's success. In addition, boards must also understand the features of financial management and board capital.

Financial Management and Board Capital

Board capital and financial management are also business practices that can affect the performance of nonprofits. Azevedo (2022) posited that board practices affect community relations and fundraising. Boards have a fiduciary responsibility to the organization to oversee the finances and raise funds; financial management and board capital are essential to nonprofits' success. Boards that cannot provide the oversight needed for effective board governance tend to have low board capital (Azevedo, 2022). As a practice, board capital is the board's ability to provide resources and identify opportunities for organizational growth and sustainability (Azevedo, 2022). Having access to external resources is essential for the organization.

Azevedo (2022) focused on community foundations. Azevedo used an exploratory study to discuss the impact of board capital on board effectiveness by looking at specific aspects of board capital, such as human capital, social capital, and structural capital. Azevedo identified several activities of influential boards, such as fulfilling the mission and purpose of the organization, strategic planning, financial management, and ensuring adequate resources. The community boards hold the organization fiscally and functionally accountable and are the driving force behind foundation boards (Azevedo, 2022). However, researchers rarely study the impact of community foundation board members and their capital. Azevedo (2022) identified competencies essential to board effectiveness, including intellectual, interpersonal, educational, and strategic dimensions.

However, Stühlinger (2022) focused on financial management competencies critical to the success of nonprofit performance and proposed that boards must integrate these

competencies into their planning. The financial management of nonprofit organizations differs from that of for-profit organizations and is more complex (Stühlinger, 2022). The source of revenue for nonprofits derives from donations and public funds. However, for-profit organizations receive revenue from various sources, such as goods and services. The complexity of financial management, including the different financing mechanisms and sources of revenue, makes it difficult for financial planning and control (Stühlinger, 2022). However, strategic management responsibility allows the board to plan and control the organization's financial management. Measuring organizational and financial performance requires knowledge of several competencies: strategic financial planning, management of reserves, accounting, budgeting, and management of reserves (Stühlinger, 2022).

Stühlinger (2022) proposed that a positive relationship exists between financial management competencies and financial performance. This relationship was contingent on-board success and their ability to govern effectively. The board members' performance-related skills were positively associated with observed organizational performance (Stühlinger, 2022). Stühlinger's analysis suggested that financial competencies can help the board succeed, enhance the organization's performance, and increase sustainability.

The Problem

Neglecting to integrate business practices can hinder the organization's progression. The general problem is the lack of effective board governance, which results in operational challenges. Nonprofit organizations have an essential role in the economy; therefore, board governance has become a growing topic (Zollo et al., 2019). Board tasks, structure, and processes make up the effectiveness of board governance that allows for the effective functioning of the organization (Zollo et al., 2019). Evidence suggests that boards that do not

perform efficient and effective operations can suffer. Zollo et al. (2019) proposed that underperforming boards affect operations and their outcomes. Stakeholders hold boards accountable for the organization's performance to ensure long-term sustainability (Zollo et al., 2019). Zollo et al. indicated that the previous focus on board mechanisms failed to address the role of stakeholders in board governance. Zollo et al. integrated the stakeholder theory perspective for sustainability in their study. Further discussion on this theory will occur in the theories section of the research concept.

Research also linked for-profit and nonprofit governance proposing board problems are similar. Zollo et al. (2019) pointed out the similarities between nonprofit board governance and for-profit, suggesting no difference exists. Identical to nonprofits, a relationship exists between corporate governance sustainability and financial performance (Lu, 2021). Corporate governance is not just applicable to corporations; it can also apply to nonprofit organizations (Zollo et al., 2019). This analysis implies that for-profit and nonprofit governance can affect the organization's performance. Sustainability and financial performance are higher in organizations with strong corporate governance (Lu, 2021).

Cohesiveness was also an essential aspect of governance in nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Evidence suggests that board cohesiveness can positively affect organizational outcomes (Jaskyte, 2018). Cohesive boards have better atmospheres during board meetings and contribute to the organization's commitment. Many board members remain on the board and are enthusiastic to support the vision, mission, and objectives. However, empirical evidence exists that suggests cohesiveness can have an adverse reaction to good governance.

Jaskyte (2018) denoted that cohesiveness could be negative, and strong directives seeking uniformity often deter differing views. Directors choose not to share their opinions out of fear of

ridicule or rejection, becoming incoherent and impeding organizational outcomes (Jaskyte, 2018). This impediment can cause dysfunction in governing, a common complaint of EDs (Freiwirth, 2017). Another reason for board dysfunction was the board's lack of training and responsibilities because of using traditional governance models (Freiwirth, 2017). The rapidly changing environment requires organizations to integrate governance models that are more aligned with all stakeholders' needs. Therefore, board governance has become more relevant and urgent to ensure the success of operations and meet the needs of the stakeholders and communities.

Brandes et al. (2022) argued that board directors and board directors' value and effectiveness decrease when directors serve on three or more boards and are constantly busy. The research denoted that directors' challenges in their primary occupation are not as effective and influential in their director board responsibilities (Brandes et al., 2022). This perspective was about corporate governance and can also apply to nonprofits. Permanent employment demands and time restraints can detract from directorship roles (Brandes et al., 2022). The detraction can be a reason for board dysfunction and the ineffectiveness of nonprofit governance. Board directors often lack the time and resources to fulfill the responsibilities necessary for governance because their roles are volunteer. Board success requires five aspects: (a) commitment, (b) appropriate skill set, (c) trust, (d) communication, and (e) collaboration (An, 2021). However, no detailed and concise research denoted that failure to integrate aspects leads to ineffective governance or unsuccessful boards. Throughout the study, mixed opinions exist on what is more effective.

Concepts

Concept 1

Cooper and Schindler (2014) proposed that concepts are those meanings and characteristics associated with specific events, objects, behaviors, or situations. Researchers use concepts to communicate and understand objects and events with common ground (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Three concepts existed for the research proposal. Concept one of the research project proposed board training and experience related to effective board governance. Although training was critical to the board members' performance, experience was not a requirement to become a board member for the executive directors in the study. Roshayani et al. (2018) discussed the desire for board capabilities for good governance and asserted that the board plays a critical role in the organization and must ensure nonprofits govern appropriately. This analogy was accurate, and board members have an instrumental role in nonprofit board governance.

Roshayani et al. (2018) asserted that boards should integrate the resource-based view concept (RBV) and have capable employees in essential roles who can use their skills to build internal expertise. Literature from previous research by Roshayani et al. (2018) associated board competencies with human capital, such as commitment, knowledge, skills, motivation, and loyalty. According to Roshayani et al. (2018), human capital can translate into skills that enhance board efficiency. The RBV concept stresses the importance of individuals possessing the right capabilities as board directors. From this perspective, an organization considers those capabilities as a resource. The study findings revealed that commitment, specific skill sets, motivation, and loyalty were necessary for effective board governance.

Using RBV, Roshayani et al. (2018) included a Malaysian study that explored capabilities for good governance by looking at several nonprofit organizations in Malaysia. The study identified four capabilities: (a) experience, (b) expertise, (c) social, and (d) interpersonal as critical to having good governance. Organizations with directors who lacked these capabilities

had difficulties achieving effective governance (Roshayani et al., 2018). The study's findings revealed issues with board governance because directors lack certain aspects. For example, Roshayani et al. (2018) posited that directors without experience tend to lack a deep understanding of the organization. This statement contradicted the study findings. Board experience was not a factor for effective board governance. However, expertise and social and interpersonal capabilities were critical to achieving the board's goals.

Experience was an advantage for directors because fundraising and social relations are critical. Roshayani et al. (2018) associated this finding with experience capabilities. However, the study findings did not show that experience was crucial for effective governance. Directors who do not understand their obligations tend to engage less (Roshayani et al., 2018). The findings affiliate with expertise capabilities. The study findings revealed that board members who lack knowledge of their roles, responsibilities, and obligations are less participatory in discussions. Organizations with directors with expertise or expert skills in particular areas, such as finance, have more government grants (Roshayani et al., 2018). No evidence in the findings revealed that organizations with financial experts had more grants, although research proposed that organizations that performed better related more with effective boards (Ihrke & Ford, 2017). However, Roshayani et al. (2018) denoted that directors with expert capabilities are more efficient as directors. Overall, the Malaysian study proposed that good governance requires board directors with specific capabilities to be effective, and the findings in this study correlate with the Malaysian study.

Concept 2

Concept two of the study reflected the relationship between the board chair and executive leader, which is related to the organization's function. The leadership role of the executive

director and board chair was an issue nonprofits face. Mathews (2019) posited that a lack of

understanding exists between the executive director and board chair roles, including improving

governance processes and developing leaders. Clarifying the role of each position contributes to

the organization's overall effectiveness. However, the problem with determining the role still

exists. Mathews (2019) discussed role theory and the misperception of roles between the board

chair and executive leader that impacts governance, which comprises an individual's perceptions

and the expectations of others.

Role theory includes the misconception that roles and behaviors exist, which leads to role

ambiguity and conflict (Mathews, 2019). This issue also leads to unsuccessful board governance,

but improving management practices and board governance can help nonprofits succeed. The

organization's internal and external environments can influence governance processes and

leadership roles (Mathews, 2019). However, research on the dyad roles between board chairs and

executive leaders is minimal. Mathews (2019) argued that role clarity contributes to overall

organizational effectiveness and that reducing dyadic role ambiguity diminishes an

organization's performance. Board chairs and executive leaders who share the same capabilities

and complement each other tend to work more efficiently and effectively (Freiwirth, 2017).

Board chairs and EDs who develop partnerships and understand their roles succeed more

with organizational and process changes (Mathews, 2019). This change occurs when the two

develop a relationship where mutual respect, regular communication, and a balance between

governance and management exist (Freiwirth, 2017). Disagreement on the perception of roles

leads to confusion, role conflict, and stress, which can contribute to issues in operations

(Mathews, 2019). Consequently, improving board governance and management practices,

including leadership development, requires a relationship/partnership between the board chair and ED where the two practice power-sharing instead of dominance (Mathews).

Mathews (2019) researched a multiple qualitative case study involving 34 chairs and EDS of 17 community-based nonprofit organizations. A question for the participants was to describe areas of clarity, conflict, and confusion regarding their roles. The thematic findings concerning the board chair and ED occurred in three categories: congruent, less congruent, and conflict. Mathew's research revealed congruence between the chair and ED when working as a team, sharing leadership, and defining the board's responsibility (Mathews, 2019). Mathew posited that chairs and EDs who conceptualized their relationships as dyadic partners were more successful in improving organizational effectiveness (Mathews, 2019). However, depending on the person or situation, less congruence existed when roles changed and during the gray areas regarding an individual's role (Mathews, 2019). Less congruence occurs during leadership changes where personalities may have conflicts or the leadership style changes.

 In contrast, conflicts existed between the chair and ED regarding views of their roles and interpreting the organization's mission (Mathews, 2019). The study depicted that board chairs and ED's perceptions of their roles were divergent, and some chairs did not understand the organization's mission (Mathews, 2019). Good governance requires board chairs to understand the organization's mission to ensure the ED and staff can manage the strategic plan (Freiwirth, 2017). Board chairs who lack knowledge of the mission cannot effectively lead the board or EDs, thereby impeding organizational performance.

Concept 3

Concept three of the study suggested that board governance relates to the operation's sustainability. Improving board governance was critical to organizational performance and

sustainability. Ihrke and Ford (2017) argued that governing boards are assets for nonprofit organizations, public and private. Research over the years suggests that scholars have found that organizations that achieved their goals and had more effective boards performed better (Ihrke & Ford, 2017). Scholarly evidence also associated effective boards with organizations that performed better fiscally.

Scholars are beginning to understand the link between performance and good governance in public and private organizations. Ihrke and Ford (2017) explored nonprofit boards of public and charter schools and identified board development practices for good governance. The research revealed several lessons, including that board development practices improved organizational performance and boards that invested in development performed better. In addition, boards that embraced development appeared more credible by internal and external members, and boards that embraced development followed governing best practices (Ihrke & Ford, 2017).

Ihrke and Ford (2017) used a questionnaire to determine the difference between traditional public and nonprofit charter school board members' engagement in board development and board governance priority. Each aspect plays a pivotal role in sustainability and effective governance. The study findings revealed that traditional public schools did not engage in formal board development activities as much as nonprofit charter schools. In addition, conventional public schools engage in development activities more when dysfunction occurs. Charter boards are also involved in development activities at regular intervals or board elections. Furthermore, charter school board members seem to engage in development activities more than traditional public board members, which is critical to board success (Ihrke & Ford, 2017). Boards that neglected to engage in development activities encounter challenges in governing

effectively. Board member priorities included board development, strategic planning, and district or school fiscal performance monitoring. However, out of the three, charter members prioritized board development more.

Contrary to Ihrke and Ford's (2017) perspective, the literature included the association between the board's performance and complex organizational and labor dynamics (Gazley & Nicholson-Crotty, 2018). The perception was that a coercive imposition from stakeholders and regulators caused normative pressures, which affected board governance. According to Gazley and Nicholson-Crotty (2018), the anecdotal and subjective normativism of the nonprofit field drives board performance. This performance results from boards following prescribed practices, which consist of adhering to regulations and state laws about nonprofit organizations. Gazley and Nicholson-Crotty (2018) posited that environmental factors, organizational factors, and board composition influence board behavior, which drives board and organization performance and affects sustainability.

Theories

Valldeneu et al. (2021) pinpointed leadership as critical for organizational success; therefore, leaders must motivate, improve efficiency, achieve growth, and create a productive environment. Achieving organizational goals and outcomes requires leaders to have certain leadership styles in operations and for board directors. Board governance affects operations, and leaders must understand leadership theories to ensure organizational success. Valldeneu et al. (2021) also linked certain leadership styles to organizational outcomes and defined leadership as an individual who influences individuals to achieve a purpose. Leadership also informs the group of what they need to accomplish objectives. Five leadership theories for board governance, transformational, servant, stewardship, resource dependency, and stakeholder, were in the study.

Each theory received discussion on the significance of achieving effective board governance and the negative impact of the theory.

Transformational Leadership

Xie (2020) discussed transformational leadership and its effect on followers. Transformational leadership comprises a dominant leadership theory in which leaders influence the behaviors and attitudes of others while accomplishing challenging organizational objectives (Xie, 2020). Transformational leadership inspires followers to achieve their goals and improve work performance. Scholars proposed that this form of leadership creates a supportive environment of followers, which benefits board chairs and directors (Xie, 2020). Valldeneu et al. (2021) argued that transformational leaders establish strong relationships with followers and use the relationships to motivate followers to go beyond to accomplish the mission. Leaders communicate the long-term vision where individuals commit to achieving goals (Valldeneu et al., 2021). Researchers suggested issues with the transformational leadership style.

Scholars proposed that instead of promoting the needs of followers and organizational values, transformational leaders have been known to behave out of self-interest, and followers tend to think their ideology is egotistical (Xie, 2020). This analysis has led scholars to focus on the ethical dimensions of transformational leadership, suggesting two styles: authentic and pseudo (Xie, 2020). Authentic leadership is morality, whereas pseudo is when leaders satisfy their interests rather than the organization. Board directors are more concerned about strengthening and building their resumes than focusing on the organization's interests (Xie, 2020). Pseudo-behavior becomes illegal because of choice problems instead of education (Xie, 2020). Therefore, authentic leadership has been the preferred style for improving board and organizational performance. In summary, transformational leadership encourages leaders to

behave consistently with specific values and encourages followers to commit to those values

(Peng et al., 2020).

Servant Leadership

However, servant leadership focuses on serving others by making a positive impact on

the lives of others (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Servant leadership has become increasingly

prominent in organizations, specifically in treating customers (Pearse, 2017). Human resource

practitioners use competency frameworks to develop leaders and ensure organizational

effectiveness (Pearse, 2017). Organizational leaders obligate themselves to all stakeholders to

serve the greater good of society for sustainability, which requires a new kind of leadership.

Servant leadership supports followers' personal growth and development by putting them first

and helping them reach their full potential (Xie, 2020). Servant leadership is a better approach in

NPOs; however, it requires specific skills because of its manifestation and authenticity. Xie

(2020) identified superior listening skills as the most critical for servant leaders; still,

conceptualization, stewardship, building community, and persuasion are other characteristics

necessary for servant leadership.

Pearse (2017) proposed that servant leadership requires service, specifically, serving the

customer. From this perspective, the customer consists of all stakeholders. Evidence suggests

this type of service in leadership contributed to improvement in organizations and organizational

success (Pearse, 2017). The key motive of servant leadership is that leaders should serve others

first instead of leading them and consider service as a mission and responsibility to others, which

links this style to better performance (Pearse, 2017). Servant leadership theory also recommends

that leaders think systematically and act in the interest of collective welfare, not merely the

followers. Evidence exists from scholars' arguments that leaders may put the needs of followers

above the organization's interest (Pearse, 2017). Scholars argue that a leader's service must maintain consistency with the changing environment and contribute to the overall performance of an organization. Leaders must balance the demands and needs of various stakeholders, including their followers' needs (Pearse, 2017). Another perspective of servant leadership suggests that leaders must persuade others of their point of view (Peng et al., 2020). Through persuasion, the leader shows followers their way of thinking rather than coercing those individuals to think that way (Peng et al., 2020). Board chairs can also see a vision for the future and share that vision, understandably allowing members to buy into the vision (Peng et al., 2020). Therefore, followers will maximize their efforts to achieve the goals (Peng et al., 2020). The stewardship leadership theory is in the study because board members often misinterpret their roles.

Stewardship Theory

Stewardship theory allows individuals to focus more on organizational goals than self-interest (Peng et al., 2020). Keay (2017) explored stewardship theory from a corporate board director and board accountability perspective; however, research denoted that the same concepts would apply to nonprofit organizations. Stewardship theory includes the assumption that explains directors' roles and behaviors and emphasizes the board's partnership and cooperation. Organizational behavior scholars received credit for this theory for over 25 years (Keay, 2017). In stewardship theory, directors act in the best interest of their organization as stewards instead of fostering personal economic interests (Keay, 2017).

When directors work in a collectivist/organizational manner, they work toward organizational ends, fulfilling personal needs (Keay, 2017). Some researchers further emphasize that stewardship theory includes a commitment to the well-being of individuals (Keay, 2017).

Fairness, justice, and concern for others motivate individuals and directors to look after the organization's and others' interests. In this manner, directors seek intrinsic rewards instead of extrinsic satisfaction in seeing the organization succeed. Therefore, stewardship can drive the board and the organization's performance. Evidence suggests that some issues occur with this theory.

Contrary to Keay's research, some scholars argued that stewardship theory does not provide apparent presumptions on bounded rationality, which decreases its relevance and realism (Wijethilake & Ekanayake, 2020). This conflicting opinion suggests CEO duality, where integrating the board chair and CEO role can improve performance (Wijethilake & Ekanayake, 2020). Researchers denoted that using the duality role can consequently lead to higher performance. Madhani (2017) identified two types of directors: inside (executives) and outside (non-executives), suggesting that inside directors have more knowledge about the organization and are more willing to enhance their performance.

Often seen more in Japanese companies, stewardship theory proposes that individuals are loyal and committed to the organization. An assumption alludes to the stewardship theory that the behavior of board directors automatically aligns with an appointment to the position. The theory proposes that directors possess a different type of loyalty derived from organizational theory. Individuals willingly subjugate their interests to protect the organization and others. Directors desire to achieve success from intrinsic satisfaction by attaining the organization's goals and objectives and gaining recognition from other directors (Keay, 2017). The theory also places importance on an organizational structure that integrates harmonization between directors and shareholders. Joint decision-making, information exchange, and stewardship theory have

drawbacks because of transaction costs, such as the time invested in resolving problems (Keay, 2017).

Researchers criticize the theory for giving directors unrestricted authority when exercising discretion (Keay, 2017). Stewardship theory also neglects to account for instances when directors do not act as good stewards (Madhani, 2017). Keay (2017) discussed the rationale for the accountability of board directors, suggesting stakeholders find directors suspicious when accountability exists. A high level of trust does not involve accountability, although acquiring external resources requires accountability (Keay, 2017).

Resource Dependency

The resource dependency theory linked board directors to critical external resources (Madhani, 2017). The theory focuses on directors identifying and accessing resources outside of the organization. Madhani (2017) argued that the primary goal of nonprofits is to maximize performance; however, this requires linking the organization to essential resources. Researchers consider the board a vital resource for nonprofits because of the board's link to the external environment (Madhani, 2017). Ensuring sustainability requires access to external resources (An, 2021). Directors lacking access to the organization's resources can hinder its success. Madhani (2017) identified resource scarcity as a significant problem for nonprofits that causes uncertainty. The organization's ability to survive depends on the external resources of directors. Madhani (2017) proposed that directors can bring several resources to the board, including information, skills, expertise, and access to critical constituents. However, external resources assist the organization in its financial performance (An, 2021).

Madhani (2017) identified several attributes of the board that contribute to resource dependency, including expertise, providing advice and counsel, linking the organization to

valuable resources, enhancing the organization's legitimacy, and formulating a strategic planning

strategy. These attributes are necessary to obtain effective board governance. Madhani (2017)

also shed light on relational capital, a process consisting of informal and formal ties of directors.

The research suggested that well-connected directors have better access to information to assist

with strategic decision-making and planning. Additionally, network ties allow directors to obtain

information about effective board governance by leveraging connections of their social and

business contacts (Madhani, 2017).

Madhani (2017) indicated that board directors have a more significant role than

monitoring the organization and that success and sustainability require securing resources.

Resource dependency theory allows directors to create environmental linkages between the

organization and external resources (Madhani, 2017). More links to the environment widen the

relational networks and increase access to additional resources, which improves performance.

Madhani (2017) perceived that resource dependency theory connects board directors to the

external environment to access critical resources for sustainability. This theory proves to be an

essential element for effective board governance and organizational performance because board

governance drives the organization. However, the stakeholder theory is also essential for board

governance, which allows organizations to maintain healthy relationships with all stakeholders

(Roshayani et al., 2018).

Stakeholder Theory

The emergence of stakeholder theory allowed advocates to stress the importance of all

stakeholders (Squires & Elnahla, 2020). The theory requires leaders to consider the interests of

all stakeholders, including those outside of the organization, by entering a relationship with

many groups that can influence the organization (Squires & Elnahla, 2020). The theory assumes

intrinsic value consists of all legitimate stakeholders and that no prevailing interests exist (Squires & Elnahla, 2020). Whitney and Thams (2019) argued that organizations must systematically address the needs and demands of all stakeholders to survive and adequately perform. Konadu et al. (2021) confirmed this theory, proposing that paying attention to all stakeholders increases organizational success. By understanding and balancing the interests of all groups, boards can govern more effectively (Squires & Elnahla, 2020).

Survival and long-term success hinge on board members' ability to consider the needs of all stakeholders because board directors are responsible for decision-making (Konadu et al., 2021). Konadu et al. (2021) noted that a better possibility of good governance occurs when board directors align the interests of all stakeholders. Therefore, a critical function of leaders involves identifying key stakeholders while managing conflicting interests. Effective board governance helps boards manage and deal with challenges (Konadu et al., 2021). A critical issue with board governance involves directors focusing on self-interest instead of looking out for all stakeholders.

However, evidence suggests that attempting to satisfy the needs of all stakeholders could alienate others (Whitney & Thams, 2019). Whitney and Thams argued that over the years, a sizable amount of literature has attempted to make a case for stakeholder theory and identify best practices that will determine how to balance the needs of diverse stakeholders. Scholarly evidence suggests that no evidence exists that denotes the role of board directors in stakeholder management (Whitney & Thams, 2019). Stakeholders press organizations to increase the board's role in strategy formulation because organizational leaders often lack the knowledge and experience to formulate and implement strategies (Whitney & Thams, 2019). Stakeholders also

demand more transparency from boards and organizations; therefore, directors are forging to strengthen relationships between stakeholders and the organizations (Konadu et al., 2021).

Further researchers suggested that critics propose the theory as too broad, with no standard definition (Squires & Elnahla, 2020). Researchers also denoted the theory as imprecise, which creates an assumption for confusion and ineffective thinking because the theory attempts to satisfy multiple stakeholders (Squires & Elnahla). The premise behind this perspective suggests that satisfying all stakeholders can propose a challenge, thereby creating confusion in the decision-making process. Criticism included not distinguishing between stakeholders and their relevance or importance to the organization (Squires & Elnahla, 2020). Board directors must remain transparent about who stakeholders are and how they connect to the organization.

Constructs

Cooper and Schindler (2014) proposed that an objective concept comprises the degree to which a concept does or does not have something objective, and researchers can visualize an image of characteristics. However, an objective concept becomes an abstract concept, or a construct, when researchers have difficulties visualizing that image of characteristics (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Constructs are ideas invented for research and theory-building (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Four constructs emerged for the study. Each construct depicts the different effects leaders have on organizational or board performance.

Construct 1

Construct 1 based on the board director's performance in training, expertise, experience, and board size. Researchers suggested that board directors have an instrumental role in governance and have multiple responsibilities (Puyvelde et al., 2018). In addition to monitoring executive leaders, two primary duties are identifying and providing resources (Puyvelde et al.,

2018). Training, expertise, experience, and board size are based on how well the board functions as a group and the board director's performance (Puyvelde et al., 2018). The board's effectiveness depends on the performance of certain functions. The board functions consist of financial oversight, CEO evaluation, monitoring of organizational performance, and fundraising (Puyvelde et al., 2018). Each function is critical for good board governance and the board director's performance. The research proposed that neglecting to integrate certain functions can affect the board's ability to perform, impacting operations and impeding progress.

Over the years, an increase in studying the dynamics of nonprofit board governance occurred to develop a deeper understanding of processes and behavior (Puyvelde et al., 2018). Many researchers have studied the relationship between board effectiveness and organizational performance, but a lack of empirical research on this topic still exists (Puyvelde et al., 2018). Research considers the broad effectiveness of nonprofit organizations' social construction, meaning there is no real, independent property, meaning objective reality exists only in individuals' perceptions (Puyvelde et al., 2018). Genuine concern about board effectiveness exists because of people's beliefs (Puyvelde et al., 2018). This analysis derived from a sociological perspective of social construction.

Other evidence suggests that board effectiveness is a reality and that good governance should not depend on the board director's performance but on the board's ability to avoid conflicts of interest. Board members fulfill their duty of care by monitoring finances and supervising executives, operating transparently, and aligning the board's activities with the organization's strategic priorities (Gazley & Nicholson-Crotty, 2018). In addition, term limits, education on governance, and having a diverse board were practices for good governance (Gazley & Nicholson-Crotty, 2018). The problem involves some boards neglecting to integrate

practices beneficial for good governance and focusing on self-interest. Evidence suggests that board effectiveness is multidimensional and links directors' roles and responsibilities to stewardship and resource dependency theory (Puyvelde et al., 2018).

Gazley and Nicholson-Crotty (2018) presented similar evidence that the multidimensionality of governance influences board performance. The multidimensionality factors include environmental, organizational, and board composition. Integrating these factors influences the board to use specific theories (stewardship and resource dependency theory) that help boards understand the behaviors of directors (Gazley & Nicholson-Crotty, 2018). In short, understanding behaviors assists boards with strategy management and determining how to work around issues that may hinder board progression.

Construct 2

Construct two stated that board chairs who integrate servant leadership have better participation from board members. Board chairs can set the tone and culture of the board, and integrating servant leadership influences governance. Servant leadership theory proposes that leaders serve others before leading them, which links this theory to better performance (Pearse, 2017). In addition to serving, servant leadership prepares others to serve through persuasion instead of coercing (Heyler & Martin, 2018). However, specific chair characteristics and qualities are more effective than others and can influence how well the board relates to the chair (Freiwirth, 2017).

In contrast, researchers suggest that integrating this leadership theory would not be a good practice for organizations because the theory strengthens dependency on the leader (Liu, 2019). This theory has many interpretations that exemplify various behaviors because research does not provide a clear, concise definition of servant leadership (Andersen, 2018). Some

scholars suggested that the theory's only concern involves making an organization profitable (Andersen, 2018). Although this perception applies to for-profit organizations, the board chair's lack of establishing authority recognizes servant leadership as a disadvantage. When directors see the board catering to their needs, it indicates that no authoritative figure exists. Overall, many definitions and perspectives on the purpose of servant leadership exist. However, researchers denoted that board chairs who practice servant leadership receive more participation in the decision-making process, which proves the significance of good governance (Kanadlı et al., 2020).

Construct 3

Construct 3 states that executive leaders incorporate transformational leadership to encourage staff to focus on the organization's mission. Peng et al. (2020) indicated that employees who commit to achieving the mission and good board governance are critical to an organization's performance (Peng et al., 2020). Transformational leadership encourages the team by building self-confidence and morale to help accomplish the goals. This psychological influence and encouragement attach employees to the organization (Peng et al., 2020). Therefore, executive leaders use transformational leadership theory to encourage employees to care about achieving organizational goals (Mohammed & Kundi, 2020).

In addition to influencing employees to commit to the organization, leaders can also influence employees' attitudes (Peng et al., 2020). Empirical evidence shows a positive effect on transformational leadership and affective commitment (Peng et al., 2020). Mohammed and Kundi (2020) referred to affective as an individual's commitment to the organization because it relates to job satisfaction, low turnover, and job performance. Employees who are loyal and passionate about the organization tend to have an emotional commitment that drives their

performance. Researchers discovered that employees who remained with the organization and neglected to seek alternative employees have high levels of affective commitment (Mohammed & Kundi, 2020). Another essential aspect revealed is that transformational leaders help followers behave maturely and realistically and show more significant concern for the organization and less self-interest and personal achievement (Mohammed & Kundi, 2020).

Furthermore, employees commit to transformational leaders who display the vision, explain how to achieve it, and lead by example (Mohammed & Kundi, 2020). However, an abundant amount of public administration literature documents the positive impact of transformational leaders on employees' motivation, attitudes, and behavior that does not suggest leadership style as the best for nonprofits (Peng et al., 2020). Empirical evidence cannot determine which leadership works best for nonprofits, and leaders must decide which works best for their organization (Mohammed & Kundi, 2020). Furthermore, few scholars have taken a holistic view to examine the link between transformational leadership and affective commitment (Peng et al., 2020). A shortage of studies considers the leadership processes and organizational context linking the type of leadership with followers' behavior (Peng et al., 2020). At its core, leaders integrating transformational leadership can influence the attitude of followers and their commitment to the leader and organization (Peng et al., 2020).

Construct 4

Construct 4 reflects that the organization's performance demonstrates the board's effectiveness. The external operating environment consistently reflects uncertainty and tension because of the changing needs and resources in the nonprofit sector (Weisberg, 2019). Stakeholders, including funders, demand more accountability from board directors and request social impact measurements to ensure meeting goals (Weisberg, 2019). Therefore, directors must

integrate board practices that will increase effectiveness. However, research denoted the difficulty in identifying what practices are more conducive to good board governance because of perceptions (Chu et al., 2021). The director's perception of board efficacy can easily shape the board's direction by determining how to set goals, how much effort to exert, and how the board members should perform (Chu et al., 2021). This situation can potentially cause bias among the directors and slow down progress on the board.

Directors have unique insights into how boards should operate and the obstacles they face in fulfilling their responsibilities because they serve on multiple boards (Cheng Chu et al., 2021). The board's ability to provide helpful information on the boundaries of its duties, internal operations, and areas for governance improvement can pose an advantage. Chu et al. (2021) conducted qualitative research using a survey to pose several questions about the director, board, and company characteristics. The survey also posed questions about the internal operations of the board and its' overall effectiveness in accomplishing the board's primary responsibilities.

Although this research derives from a corporate governance perspective, evidence suggests a link between corporate and nonprofit board governance. In conducting the research study, Cheng Chu et al. (2021) identified several strengths and weaknesses in board effectiveness. The research revealed that boards are more effective in meeting preparedness and collegiality but less effective in several facets of internal governance (Chu et al., 2021). Those factors include addressing problematic board members and training new individuals for board members. The research also associates board effectiveness with external stakeholder theory and suggests that boards are more engaged when stronger interpersonal relationships, more robust internal governance, and effective meeting management exist (Chu et al., 2021). The survey

proposed that when board directors know members before joining the board and hold leadership positions, those individuals are likely to contribute to successful board governance.

Related Studies

Board Challenges

Throughout this literature review, scholars supported nonprofit board governance and its effect on operations. Piscitelli et al. (2020) posited the board's responsibility as responsible for the organization's success of viability. Board governance continues as an instrumental aspect of nonprofit organizations. Without a board, nonprofits could not become incorporated or operate under the United States (US) law for 501 (c) 3 of not-for-profit organizations. The board of directors must set a strategic direction and provide fiduciary oversight without wading into operations (Piscitelli et al., 2020). Neglecting to set the direction and provide oversight can hinder the organization's performance. This section includes studies related to board governance and operations.

Some studies over the years concentrated on the roles and responsibilities of boards, their effectiveness, and the relationship between organizational and board effectiveness (Chelliah et al., 2016). Other research included defining board governance and discussing the board's composition. However, Chelliah et al.'s (2016) research identified several board challenges hindering organizational success. The research presented empirical evidence about nonprofits in Australia using a survey and interview data to determine what leaders believe are significant issues in governance.

Unlike other research, Chelliah et al. (2016) research proposed that internal and external contingencies that organizations face influence the effectiveness of board governance. Those contingencies include demands from stakeholders, the recruitment process for board members,

the roles and skillsets of board directors, and resources for training and development (Chelliah et al., 2016). Each of these contingencies posed challenges for effective board governance. Chelliah et al. (2016) focused on adopting a contingency approach to governance. Proposed processes work differently according to an organization's changes and circumstances and connect the effectiveness to those systems that align with the contingencies. However, Zollo et al. (2019) indicated that board tasks, structure, and processes determine the effectiveness of governance. The most exciting aspect of Chelliah et al.'s (2016) research is the emphasis on using a membership model for board governance. The membership model elects the board of directors, and because the process requires the selection of members, the organization can tap into different funding sources (Chelliah et al., 2016).

However, Piscitelli et al. (2020) presented different governance models: (a) a traditional hierarchy, (b) policy governance, and (c) a non-traditional one. In the traditional model, the board oversees operations and performs its typical governance role. Additionally, the chair's role serves as the primary point of contact for the executive director. In the traditional model, the board also creates committees to mirror staff functions, including programming, finances, and human resources (Piscitelli et al., 2020). The dominant model comprises a traditional perspective; however, some scholars proposed the results-based approach because boards focus on strategic issues (Piscitelli et al., 2020). In the traditional model, board members can overstep their boundaries by micromanaging operations, especially when members lack knowledge of their roles and responsibilities.

Piscitelli Geobey et al. (2020) used a policy model as an end-and-means approach. In this model, the board decides the organization's goals, and the employees achieve the tasks. From the policy perspective, governance focuses on achievement while avoiding behaviors. The policy

approach also clearly defines the role of the board and management (Piscitelli et al., 2020). Still, the end means leaving the role of interacting with external stakeholders and the board of directors.

However, the non-traditional model consisted of a results-based approach. Many Canadian nonprofits use this approach for governance. The results-based approach includes traditional and policy strategies and does not require the board to remain entirely out of operation (Piscitelli et al., 2020). Although boards can intervene during a crisis, limited involvement in operations exists (Piscitelli et al., 2020). This model directs boards to focus on strategic issues because the results-based model only allows the board to intervene during significant problems within the operations,

Piscitelli et al. (2020) emphasized using a results-based approach for creating success in nonprofit governance by focusing on three things: (a) a clear governance structure, (b) an effective board and executive officer, and (c) developing a collegial relationship between the executive officer and the board. Boards with a clear structure focus on the organization's mission and achieving results, which highlights strategy, and having a collegial relationship allows boards a representative function without interfering in operations (Piscitelli et al., 2020). Although some researchers identified the challenges and different models for good governance, most evidence provided generic best practices for governance, meaning a standard model that guarantees effectiveness does not exist.

Nonprofit Governance Quality

Willems et al. (2017) defined nonprofit governance as a set of conditions and practices an organization must fulfill to achieve its mission and vision. Their research adds to the definition description of nonprofit governance quality. Willems et al. (2017) described nonprofit

governance quality as sufficiency that occurs to meet several conditions and practices. Therefore, the organizations described nonprofit governance quality as sufficient when several conditions and practices ensure the organization achieves its mission. This viewpoint deals with sufficiency to achieve a preferred state derived from a normative perspective (Willems et al.).

As a result of this perspective, Willems et al. (2017) developed five dimensions of nonprofit governance quality to construct the concept of governance quality. The dimensions included (a) involvement of external stakeholders, (b) planning consistency, and (c) structures and procedures. In addition, (d) continuous process improvement, and (e) leadership team dynamics. Willems et al. (2017) used these dimensions to explore leadership coalition and governance quality contingencies. The leadership coalition comprises a system of individuals that establish a relationship to influence each other in collective responsibility and decision-making (Willems et al., 2017). The research method includes a qualitative study using triangulation consisting of data from interviews, observations at board meetings, financial reports, and bylaws. The findings suggested that to maintain high governance quality, a balanced coalition must exist between responsibility and decision-making to ensure governance quality.

Parsa et al. (2022) viewed nonprofit governance quality from a donation and donor perspective. The research proposed governance quality as integral for driving donations and better governance practices. Donors assume better practices encourage transparency and accountability while providing a more reliable signal for potential corruption (Parsa et al., 2022). Parsa et al. (2022) researched independent auditors from external resources and oversight committees that will increase the reliability of financials and minimize the potential for misreporting. In short, stakeholders expect organizations to have a check and balance system where organizations are accountable for their financials and for achieving the mission.

Woodroof et al. (2021) supported this argument about transparency and accountability for quality. The research suggested that transparency is fundamental to having an accountability relationship; therefore, organizations that lack transparency also lack accountability for the leaders (Woodroof et al., 2021). Also known as crucial, transparency in nonprofits garners the trust of all stakeholders. Organizations with an excellent reputation for transparency also increase donor identification and fundraising performance (Woodroof et al., 2021). An emerging consensus correlated transparency to governance and operations. Transparent organizations have better governance and success in the performance of operations.

However, transparency can appear as an internal and external issue of an organization (Woodroof et al., 2021). The director must posture transparency that disseminates throughout the organization and the external environment. For this reason, in 2008, the U.S. instituted significant changes that required nonprofit organizations to disclose certain information (Parsa et al., 2022). Through the IRS 990 tax form, organizations must provide additional information about accountability and governance. Nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt and have a total of $50,000 in gross receipts must complete the IRS 990 tax form (https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/exempt-organization-annual-filing-requirements-overview). This process allowed donors to compare organization governance while making appropriate decisions about donations (Parsa et al., 2022).

Although the government implemented changes to increase accountability and transparency, empirical evidence still discloses issues. Parsa et al. (2022) identified managerial misconduct and leaders using funding for purposes other than the mission as issues that can adversely affect operations. Other issues included using grants to pay directors, neglecting to audit financial statements, and failing to develop a process with the governing body's approval to

determine the executive leader's compensation (Parsa et al., 2022). These issues can deter boards from having governance quality while impacting operations. Furthermore, the IRS disclosure of information about nonprofits allows donors to monitor organizations despite ambiguous measures. Still, information exists that can inform donors of governance quality while making concise decisions about donations.

Staff Support, Board Knowledge, and Board Effectiveness

Throughout the literature review, most researchers pinpointed training, experience, and expertise as essential for governance. However, additional evidence denoted that staff support and the relationship with executive leaders promote effective board governance, specifically, the executive leader. Mason and Kim (2020) provided a conceptual framework for board coaching to illustrate the executive leader's relationship with the board as essential to board governance. Woodroof et al. (2021) posited that relationships drive the organization's viability. The research places executive leaders at the helm of nonprofits and asserts that leaders must lead by example to persuade followers and ensure transparency (Woodroof et al., 2021).

Additional empirical evidence suggests active leadership empowers and inspires individuals to grow and learn to increase staff support and commitment (Woodroof et al., 2021). Furthermore, evidence suggested employee continuity, board involvement, the executive leadership relationship with the board, and transparency as critical to board governance (Woodroof et al., 2021). Staff support, the executive leadership relationship with the board, and the board's knowledge can influence board effectiveness. Therefore, boards can no longer merely occupy a seat and contribute minimally to enhance their resume. Board directors must actively participate in the organization using their experience and influence to accelerate growth (Woodroof et al., 2021).

Additionally, active board directors can use their connections to create collaboration and resource-sharing opportunities (Woodroof et al., 2021). Unfortunately, board members continue to lack understanding of their roles; therefore, members overstep their boundaries and neglect to embrace best practices (Woodroof et al., 2021). For this reason, boards must carefully recruit and select potential members and invest in their training and development (Woodroof et al., 2021). Evidence remains that the executive leader's relationship with the board is critical to governance, and the best board-executive leader relationships have several characteristics essential for success (Olinske & Hellman, 2017). In the best board-executive leader relationships, the executive does not dominate the board. The board does not micromanage the daily operations, the board and executive agree on the approach to achieving the mission, and the executive leader's requests are not excessive (Olinske & Hellman, 2017). Also, the organization's effectiveness can hinge on the relationship of the board chair and executive leaders; working together harmoniously and building trust remains critical.

However, researchers proposed that a harmonious relationship between the board and executive leader is rare (Stewart, 2017). The relationship between board directors and the chair is a primary reason for executive turnover in nonprofit organizations (Olinske & Hellman, 2017). Organizations with trust, relationship, or boundary issues have problems with executive leader turnover (Olinske & Hellman, 2017). Another issue with the relationship involves boards that yield power to executives who are strong and opinionated (Stewart, 2017). At that point, the board defers to the executive and neglects to revisit their roles and responsibilities; therefore, the executive leader becomes the dominant leader (Stewart & Diebold, 2017). As a result, the executive leader can remain in the organization in the face of poor performance (Stewart & Diebold, 2017). Board chairs must intentionally build relationships with the executive and

between the board and the executive. Nonprofits operating with healthy finances are stable and tend to have less turnover of executives and staff (Stewart & Diebold, 2017).

Anticipated and Discovered Themes

According to Scharp and Sanders (2019), thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in qualitative research to determine themes from the collected data. The theme captures a noticeable aspect of the data in a pattern format that the researcher recognizes (Scharp & Sanders, 2019). From the data, the researcher can answer the research questions meaningfully. However, identifying the themes requires a specific technique. Robson and McCartan (2016) proposed six methods for identifying themes in qualitative research: The methods include (a) repetitions, (b) indigenous categories, (c) metaphors and analogies, (d) transitions, (e) similarities and differences, and (f) linguistic connectors. In addition, missing data and theory-related material are methods for determining themes (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The thematic analysis allows researchers to code and describe the patterns of data.

A consistent data pattern and anticipated and discovered themes exist throughout the literature review. An anticipated theme in the research data correlated effective board governance to high organizational performance (Mason & Kim, 2020). Although researchers denoted that board members often lack an understanding of their roles and responsibilities, studies have shown a positive relationship between organizational performance and effective nonprofit governance (Mason & Kim, 2020). Organizations that perform well have good board governance and actively engaged members.

However, some literature reflected on the visual attributes of board members instead of experience and expertise. Yet, training, board experience, and expertise was another anticipated theme in the research (Roshayani et al., 2018). McAuley (2019) posited that nonprofit

organizations are more robust with trained board members. Still, a challenge for nonprofit boards was the lack of funding to train new board members (McAuley, 2019). Further research also revealed that experience and expertise are capabilities desired in nonprofit organizations (Roshayani et al., 2018). For example, board members with financial expertise can assist nonprofits in obtaining grant funding. Empirical evidence found that boards with financial experts received more government grant funding (Roshayani et al., 2018). Expertise, experience, and training are capabilities for good governance that can improve board and organizational performance. However, the study findings did not identify experience as a capability for good governance. Ineffective board governance and low organizational performance are also correlated and another anticipated theme (Zollo et al., 2019). Researchers linked underperforming organizations to ineffective boards. Ineffective boards have members who function as both leaders and followers, lack understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and lack trust among board members (McAuley, 2019). In addition, frequent and high board turnover can lead to a loss of critical resources (An, 2021).

However, organizations with stable environments tend to thrive and have less turnover. Boards with consistent turnover have difficulties obtaining and maintaining critical resources essential to the organization, but the board is instrumental in improving and sustaining the organization's financial performance (An, 2021). Responsibilities expand beyond oversight into all aspects of nonprofits, including financial performance (An, 2021). Therefore, to further the mission, board members must collectively ensure that the organization utilizes resources appropriately (An, 2021). This process requires members to know all resources, including internal and external.

Discovered Themes

Although several themes emerged in the research, those differ from what emerged in the study findings. The literature revealed that board turnover and trust influence board effectiveness as themes linked to the organization's performance (An, 2021; Jaskyte, 2018). However, the emergent themes from the board directors interviewed were actions that hinder success, governance, chair effects, and efficacy (See Table 2). The findings suggested that members who failed to attend meetings and lacked discussion participation affected the board's performance, but this did not link to the organization's performance. Also, the findings showed that board members understood the bylaws, including policies and procedures. Board members unfamiliar with the organization's bylaws could not correctly contribute to governing. Although this process can affect the board director's performance, the findings did not indicate that they affected the organization.

The findings also revealed that the board chair is instrumental in governance and sets the tone and strategic direction. Freiwirth (2017) proposed that the board chair has considerable influence on the board. The findings suggested that board members cannot fulfill their roles if the chair does not effectively lead. In addition, the study pinpointed that the chair position affects the organization, the executive leader, and the board's performance, which was also in the literature (Puyvelde et al., 2018). Efficacy elements were the last theme discovered in the board directors' coding. The findings revealed that board experience, diverse skills, and training were efficacy elements critical for board governance. Even though the experience was not a requirement for many organizational members, it added value to the members and board. The efficacy elements occurred in the literature although the findings revealed that boards with diverse skill sets and members trained in governance performed better.

The executive leader's emergent themes included a working board, efficacy elements, values that create positive outcomes, and theories contributing to success (See Table 1). Working boards comprised members who participated on sub-committees, were open to dialogue and debate, and created scorecards to grade their performance. Jaskyte's (2018) research proposed that boards that are open to dialogue and discussion and proactive have highly effective boards. Efficacy elements included board members who understood their roles and responsibilities and board practices. Literature research suggested that board members unaware of their roles could not govern effectively (Mason & Kim, 2020). The findings also revealed that boards familiar with general business practices, such as strategic and financial management, performed better. Dmitry et al. (2021) also supported the findings about strategic management.

Trust was also a theme discovered in the literature and the findings. Building trust is essential to effective nonprofit boards (McAuley, 2019). Servant leadership theory includes trust, suggesting this theory builds on serving others and trust between board members (McAuley, 2019). The study findings show that servant leadership contributed to the organization's success. Board members who trust each other are more productive and committed to the organization (McAuley, 2019). Trust must exist between the board and the executive leader. Olinske and Hellman (2017) asserted that the lack of trust is another factor for executive leader turnover.

Additional empirical evidence proposes that the board chair must foster an environment where trust among the members increases participation and effectiveness (Puyvelde et al., 2018). In addition, the chair must build a relationship with the executive, which includes integrating trust. Although the board members must actively engage in board governance practices, the chair must foster an environment conducive to productive board governance. The findings revealed trust as an efficacy element that promoted effective governance. Theories that contributed to

success were also emergent themes discovered and suggested resource dependency, stakeholder, and stewardship were theories that contributed to success. Resource dependency was a theory that helped leaders identify and access external resources. Having access to external increased the organization's performance and allowed community connections.

As the case in the literature, sustainability in NPOs requires access to critical external resources (Madhani, 2017). However, stakeholders also ensure that they meet the needs of all stakeholders. The research proposed that systematically attending to the needs of all stakeholders enhanced the organization's performance (Whitney & Thams, 2019). Although the literature also indicated this could cause alienation in the organization, the findings identified stakeholder theory as beneficial to success. Lastly, stewardship emerged as a theory that contributed to its success. Focusing on organizational goals instead of self-interest benefited the organization and board. Keay (2017) proposed that good stewards commit to the welfare and growth of others. Staff, board members, and the CEO emerged in the findings as good stewards of the organization because of their commitment.

Summary of the Literature Review

In summary, boards must integrate board practices, such as board oversight, strategic management, financial management, and board capital, to assist members' performance. The board provides a function that requires oversight of NPOs (Mason & Kim, 2020). However, there are also other roles and responsibilities necessary for effectiveness. Researchers suggested that board members who lack an understanding of their fiduciary duties often struggle with governance (Mason & Kim, 2020). In addition, board members driven by self-interest also have difficulty and may not contribute to the board. Although the board's primary responsibility includes overseeing the organization, members must also engage in the strategic and financial

management processes. Strategic management allows the board to formulate, monitor, evaluate, and control strategy through strategic planning (Dmitry et al., 2021). However, the executive leader's responsibility includes implementing the strategic plan. The board members must also engage in financial management and board capital through fundraising activities and securing critical resources in the external environment. Each business practice can assist the board in being more effective in governance. The lack of these business practices impedes organizational growth and success, leading to this research concept's general problem. The lack of effective board governance results in operating challenges. Zollo et al. (2019) asserted that boards that underperform negatively impact organizations.

Through this analysis, three concepts developed in the study associated board governance with sustainability, board chair and executive leadership with the organization's function, and board training and engagement with effective board governance. Five leadership theories, the board, board chair, and executive leader's performance, transformational, servant, stewardship, resource dependency, and stakeholder, existed that could enhance the study. Transformational leadership encourages followers to achieve organizational goals, but this theory can cause misuse of power (Xie, 2020). However, the study findings did not reveal that this leadership style could cause problems. Servant leadership allows the leader to serve others; however, leaders can appear weak (Pearse, 2017).

In stewardship theory, leaders are loyal to the organization and avoid fostering personal economic interests (Keay, 2017). However, the research does not guarantee these leaders will act in the organization's best interest. Resource dependency theory links board members with critical resources outside the organization; however, these resources could minimize the control of resources and impact operations (Madhani, 2017). Stakeholder theory proposes that

organizations should balance the needs of all stakeholders to ensure sustainability and success. However, this theory can alienate some stakeholders. Satisfying all stakeholders is difficult (Whitney & Thams, 2019). Four constructs for the research concept were beneficial for answering the research questions; the board's performance can be based on training, expertise, and experience. Another construct proposed is that servant leaders can improve the participation of board members. The third construct suggested that integrating transformational leadership can encourage staff to focus on the mission and that board effectiveness influences the organization's performance. Each construct assisted the researcher in developing a practical qualitative study using the triangulation method.

The research included several related studies in the literature review. The studies included challenges with board governance, such as board members' lack of experience and training. Another study presented different governance models: traditional, policy, and non-traditional (Piscitelli et al., 2020). The traditional approach involved the board overseeing operations and performing their typical responsibilities. However, the policy model focused more on an end-and-means approach where the board determines the ends, and the responsibility includes the means to achieve the ends (Piscitelli et al., 2020). A policy model is an approach that focuses on achieving goals while avoiding any disruptive behavior (Piscitelli et al., 2020). Nonprofit governance quality is another study in the research concept that provided an overview of the importance of integrating quality into governance. The literature included several studies on governance quality and a study that included suggestions concerning examining five dimensions to ensure quality. The dimensions were (a) stakeholder involvement, (b) planning, and (c) structures and procedures. In addition, (c) continuous process improvement and (d) the dynamics of the leadership team (Willems et al., 2017). The final study included the relationship

between staff support, board knowledge, and board effectiveness. The study revealed that staff support and board knowledge correlate to board effectiveness (Mason & Kim, 2020).

The literature includes an overview of the anticipated and discovered themes. The final section of the literature review includes an overview of the themes anticipated and discovered in the research. Throughout the research, several anticipated themes proved a correlation between effective board governance and high organizational performance (Puyvelde et al., 2018). The themes also revealed a correlation between effective board governance and low organizational performance (Puyvelde et al., 2018). The studies show that organizations that perform well have board members who engage in board governance and decision-making. However, boards that do not perform well often lack effective governance.

Summary of Section 1 and Transition

The study's foundation showed an extensive explanation of what drives the issue and formulation of the study. Board governance is a potential issue for nonprofit organizations, which can affect an organization's performance. When board directors lack experience and knowledge, this often causes challenges with governing effectively, impacting an organization's success. The research questions provided the substance of the study's results and conclusion. The study used a constructivist research paradigm, which considers knowledge a social construct (Bogna et al., 2019- 2020). The goal was to obtain data from participants to provide an overview of the issue using a single case study with triangulation. The two data collection methods, interviews, and surveys facilitated the study's results and conclusion. The framework was crucial to the research and provided a map and strategy that linked the concepts, leadership theories, actors, and constructs to the issue. Each leadership theory in the study relates to a biblical principle, such as Jesus being a servant leader and his motivation to serve others.

In addition, Jesus used several other theories, including stewardship, transformational, resource dependency, and stakeholder. A relationship between each theory that aligned with biblical principles leaders should practice ensuring effective governance exists. The study contained several assumptions, limitations, and delimitations because boundaries and potential limitations are part of the study; the primary limitation was that participants would respond honestly about the perpetual challenges of board governance. To assist with this limitation, a risk mitigation strategy helps collect data confidentially through online surveys, the instruments included in the study.

A limitation of this study was the lack of previous studies on the topic; therefore, the mitigation strategy included searching for additional sources through scholarly search engines to ensure sufficient research. However, the delimitations are the research questions, constructs, and a selection of board directors. This study also consisted of a literature review outline and a review to provide readers with the research supporting the study. The foundation of this study demonstrated the issue and significance of conducting the research and completed section one of the research concept.

Following the foundation of the study, preparing the proposal is necessary by providing an exhaustive literature review to show the connection between existing knowledge and the study. The literature review will also provide scholarly sources that support and contradict the viewpoint in the study. To avoid personal bias, the research will include a discussion on bracketing and the methodology for the study. In addition, describing the participants and discussing the population, sampling method, and frame for the proposal is necessary. The data collection will be part of the process, including the instruments, data organization plan, and analysis. Lastly, the research will include creditability, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability to ensure reliability and validity, including triangulation and saturation. The proposal components included sufficient information to move forward with the project.

Section 2: The Project

The research project comprised data collection, organization, and unbiased interpretation of information to understand a specific issue or topic. The research project includes a description of the researchers' actions to conduct the study. The foundation of the research and literature review allowed the formulation of a strategy to gather, collect, analyze, and interpret data for the study. Bracketing to minimize preconceptions leading to distorted interpretations was necessary. A discussion of the purpose of the study and its role in the project, as well as a description of bracketing and its effect on the research, was in the study. Also, a discussion on the appropriateness of using a flexible design, the chosen method for the study, and the triangulation process were included in the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this flexible design single case study was to expand the research about the problems nonprofit organizations experience when board directors are ineffective. The research examined driving factors in successful board governance to determine if there was a link between board experience and effectiveness. An exploration of the more significant problem of board governance in the nonprofit industry was through an in-depth study of board governance and its effect on operations and sustainability in nonprofit organizations in the Hampton Roads area. The study included an evaluation of the impact the board chair's leadership had on board governance and an exploration of the elements necessary to ensure the success of leaders and managers.

Role of the Researcher

Before conducting a study, researchers must identify a problem and determine the research questions. Afterward, researchers create a strategy containing a list of actions to perform to collect the data. The research problem for this study was the lack of effective board governance, which resulted in operational challenges. The project consisted of a single case study using a constructivist paradigm. The first action was identifying several nonprofit organizations and finding multiple board members. Determining who will participate in the study is a necessary step.

However, studying a system requires obtaining participants' confidence or finding a gatekeeper to access individuals for the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, I contacted board members and executive leaders of NPOs in the Hampton Roads area. Creswell and Poth (2018) proposed using sampling strategies, such as finding a case, an atypical case, or a maximum. Strategizing a plan for a sampling strategy was the next step for the study. After identifying the case, the third action was to decide what information to collect and the documentation process. I used interviews and surveys to collect and interpret the data for the study. The final action was to store the data through field notes and digital files.

However, I must develop an approach to address bracketing to avoid personal bias. Florczak (2022) denoted that researchers lean toward a position based on their viewpoint rather than the truth. According to Florczak (2022), bias can occur because of inaccurate data collection, analysis, interpretation, and communications results. Bias can occur in any part of the research process; therefore, researchers cannot eliminate all bias (Florczak, 2022). In addition, bias was also perplexing, specifically in research discussions, because qualitative research cannot generalize; however, it can bring an understanding of a particular problem (Florczak, 2022).

Researchers are the instruments of data collection and must also interpret the data. Therefore, data collection and interpretation are subjective and biased, and individual perception includes bias and complications (Florczak, 2022). Effective bracketing requires researchers to separate personal experiences from the study subject. Janak (2018) defined bracketing as a thought-provoking process that allows researchers to express feelings and personal events. I used reflexivity bracketing to minimize personal bias during the research process. Janak (2018) indicated reflexive processes allow researchers to examine their narratives. In summary, I developed a list of actions that described the process. Each action was essential in obtaining results from the study. The study required the collection, interpretation, and integration of bracketing because it included a constructivist case study approach. Neglecting to use bracketing can create preconceptions that influence and negatively affect the process.

Research Methodology

Identifying the best research methodology for a study was instrumental to the process. Qualitative researchers must determine which method can most effectively answer the research questions and address the issue or topic. The flexible design allowed researchers more flexibility through the data collection process and was the primary choice for qualitative research (Robson & McCartan, 2016). I will discuss the appropriateness of the flexible design, case study, and chosen method for triangulation for this study.

Discussion of Flexible Design

Robson and McCartan (2016) asserted that within a realist framework, a theory explains reality and research questions drive the design of a study. Researchers must link the questions to theory for testing to occur. Flexible designs include the researcher and the relationship with research within the boundaries. Robson and McCartan (2016) argued that flexible design studies

include approximate knowledge of phenomena as they exist in the real world. Therefore, the flexible design proves to be no less or more legitimate than any other study, which confirms that this design was the choice (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Discussion of Case Study

The qualitative methodology consists of five approaches: (a) narrative research, (b) phenomenology, (c) grounded theory, (d) ethnography, and (e) case study. The researcher's methodology depends on the research problem, aims, objectives, and questions (Robson & McCartan, 2016). For this project, I used a single case study. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted that a case study seeks to study a bounded system, such as several individuals, an event, or an activity. Ebneyamini and Sadeghi Moghadam (2018) defined a case study as an empirical inquiry that allows researchers to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context. Out of the qualitative approaches to research, the case study allows for more flexibility. The case study provides an opportunity for a holistic view of the research process and captures the complexity of a single case (Ebneyamini & Sadeghi Moghadam, 2018).

Discussion of Method(s) for Triangulation

According to Farquhar et al. (2020), triangulation involves a metaphor for employing different methods, theories, or data sources to capture the phenomenon researchers attempt to study. Quantitation and qualitative researchers can use triangulation in studies. Triangulation allows researchers to achieve a certain degree of validity or confidence in the study (Farquhar et al., 2020). Triangulation comprises a notion of corroboration and convergence. In addition, triangulation contributes to internal and external validity, suggesting that a study's conclusions are not associated with invalid sources (Farquhar et al., 2020). In qualitative research, triangulation is a method that provides research studies with a degree of validity appropriate for

the research project (Farquhar et al., 2020). Triangulation includes possible source discrepancies (Robson & McCartan, 2016). I used more than one data collection method for the study. In addition, I used interviews and surveys as methods for triangulation.

Summary of Research Methodology

In summary, the research methodology was critical to the project. The most appropriate design and method were necessary for the results' validity and reliability. Triangulation was essential for validity because the design was flexible. Qualitative researchers who fail to use triangulation encounter issues with the study's validity. Based on scholarly evidence, I used a flexible qualitative design with a case study, and triangulation was appropriate for the study.

Participants

Qualitative researchers seeking to understand a phenomenon must identify the right participants for the study (Gill, 2020). Without the appropriate participants, attaining accurate data can cause difficulty. Participants must have direct and personal knowledge of the study topic (Gill, 2020). The researcher must identify participants willing to spend time sharing their experiences (Gill, 2020). The general problem included determining how the lack of effective board governance resulted in operational challenges. My goal was to answer three questions. The first question was: How do the roles and responsibilities of the board impact internal operations? The second question was: How does the lack of board governance affect leadership and management roles? The third question was: What effect does the board leadership have on board governance?

The study pertains to board governance and its impact on operations and effect on the leadership roles of nonprofit organizations. The eligible participants comprised board directors, board chairs, EDs, and CEOs. Researchers suggest that the lack of board governance affects

organizational outcomes and impacts the roles of leadership and management in the organization (Jaskyte, 2018). Understanding how the roles and responsibilities of the board impact operations required interviewing EDs or CEOs and board directors of nonprofits. Evidence suggests that the board chair is the gatekeeper for the board and influences the board's functioning (Freiwirth, 2017). Determining the effect of a board chair's leadership on governance also required interviewing and surveying board directors. The scholarly resources from the literature review proved that these participants were eligible for the study.

Population and Sampling

The population and sampling of research are crucial to the project. Robson and McCartan (2016) asserted that the sample links to the population. Researchers must use the sample and the population to achieve the desired results of the study. Therefore, researchers select a sample of participants from the population to conduct the study (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This section included a description of the population and sampling. Describing the characteristics of the population and explaining why these individuals were essential to the study was necessary. In addition, this section includes a discussion of different sampling methods, the sample frame, and an explanation of why a specific method was more appropriate. Saturation is an essential factor for assessing the appropriateness of purposive samples (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Therefore, I described how the sample size assisted in reaching saturation.

Discussion of Population

The population comprised board directors, EDs, and CEOs of nonprofit organizations in the Hampton Roads area. Ward and Miller-Stevens (2021) indicated that nonprofit board members are volunteers from professional backgrounds with various skills, expertise, social networks, and fundraising abilities. The board members with skill sets in different industries,

such as marketing, management, finances, and accounting, participated in the study. Board members also need to have board experience. Board members with experience, expertise, knowledge, and skills that impact effective governance were part of the criteria. Therefore, members with those attributes were necessary to participate in the study. Additional characteristics included boards that were open and disagreed respectfully. Jaskyte (2018) asserted that board members involved in decision-making are more involved in the organization's direction.

. The eligible population for the study included board directors, EDs, and CEOs of nonprofit organizations. Through the National Council of Nonprofits and Network Peninsula, I identified several nonprofit organizations in the Hampton Roads area to use for the study. The National Council of Nonprofits comprises the largest network of nonprofit organizations in the United States. The Network Peninsula organization assists nonprofits with the tools and resources to fulfill their mission. In addition, the organization provides resources for boards, such as board development and training. According to the National Council of Nonprofits (2019), Virginia has 36,210 nonprofits, and 170 are within the eligible population size. Data from the Network Peninsula report (2018) revealed that nonprofit organizations have between 12 and 13 board members (https://networkpeninsula.org/sector). The eligible population for this study was approximately 2,040 board directors and 170 EDs and CEOs. The participants were board directors with the above attributes, experience, and organization leaders who were EDs or CEOs.

Discussion of Sampling

Sampling Method

Creswell (2016) identified several sampling methods: snowball, maximum variation, theory-based, criterion, and random purposeful. However, Gill (2020) discussed the most

common qualitative sampling methods: snowball, purposive, and theoretical sampling. Snowball

sampling allows current participants to identify people willing to participate in the study (Gill,

2020). The researcher's quality of participants may limit snowball sampling, which is a

disadvantage (Gill, 2020). Purposive sampling, also a standard method in qualitative research,

allows the researcher to select participants with the most knowledge about the studied

phenomenon (Gill, 2020). Locating participants rich in knowledge can cause a challenge and

disadvantage of purposive sampling. Gill (2020) proposed convenience sampling methods for

qualitative researchers, which are accessible, efficient, and economical methods that may not

provide participants with the proper knowledge. The study included purposive sampling because

participants with excessive knowledge about this phenomenon participated. After all, it was more

cost-effective.

Sample Frame

The population list comprised a sample frame used for the study (Robson & McCartan,

2016). The list contained the population members for the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

Everyone in the frame had the same opportunity to be part of the sample, and the probability

distribution ensures that each potential combination of individuals within a specific sample size

is equally probable (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Developing a sampling frame proves critical

for identifying the right participants (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Computer programs that can

create a list for the sample frame were an easy way to attain the population. However, I used a

list based on the information from the United Way of Virginia Peninsula website, which was the

nonprofit organization in the immediate area for the study.

Desired Sample and Sample Size

Researchers must use smaller samples to examine the phenomenon more deeply. Some researchers argue that no specific *rules* for determining sampling size exist. Therefore, the researcher must collect enough data to answer the research questions in the study (Gill, 2020). As the research progresses, the desired sample size could change, and the researcher will need additional participants because the predetermined size is not feasible (Gill, 2020). Sim et al. (2018) argued that the sample size will depend on several things: the research question scope, the nature of the topic, the data quality, and the study design.

However, Gill (2020) suggested that the sample size could refer to the number of people and include the number of surveys or interviews the researcher may conduct. Nonetheless, the goal of sample size allows the researcher to have enough participants to provide rich, sufficient, and in-depth information to understand the phenomenon (Gill, 2020). The sample size must sufficiently provide quality data to understand the participant's experience (Gill, 2020). The research sample comprised ten nonprofit executive leaders (CEOs and EDs) and a board of ten members in the Hampton Roads area. The sample size was 20, although the desired sample size was forty. The recommended amount suggested by scholarly research is forty (Sims et al., 2018). Accessing the sample included connecting with an organization that oversees several nonprofit organizations in the Hampton Roads area. The sample size provided quality data to understand the participant's experience (Gill, 2020).

In addition to identifying the sample size, saturation had to occur. Gill's (2020) research linked sampling strategies to sample size, and proposed sample sizes were crucial to obtaining quality data. Data saturation occurs when new information is no longer obtainable from interviews or observations and when all data becomes exhausted (Gill, 2020; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Data tends to repeat at this point, and further collection becomes redundant (Hennink &

Kaiser, 2022). Saturation is when an adequate amount of data emerges from the phenomenon, and the data collected by the researcher has captured diverse, in-depth nuances of study issues (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Summary of Population and Sampling

The participants, population, and sampling were instrumental to the study. Without these components, significant challenges could occur in answering research questions. The board directors, EDs, and CEOs of NPOs were the eligible participants and population for the study. This population addressed the questions and helped understand the phenomenon. This sampling method was appropriate because purposive sampling allowed selecting participants with the most knowledge. The participants were a sample frame from a list of nonprofit organizations in the Hampton Roads area. A sample size of ten allows saturation because studies can reach saturation within a narrow range (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). In experimental research, a standard sample size is between 9 and 17 participants (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). The goal was to access the sample by connecting with an organization in the Hampton Roads area that oversees some nonprofit organizations.

<div align="center">

Data Collection & Organization

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Understanding the data collection process was critical for obtaining quality, valid, and reliable data. Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that collecting data was more than gathering information from interviews and surveys. A complete data collection plan requires researchers to develop a checklist to guide the process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The plan consists of gathering different types of data through various methods. The researcher must also anticipate ethical issues in obtaining permission, conducting a quality sampling strategy, and developing a method for recording and storing data securely (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This section included three data

collection and analysis features and the implementation process. The three samples were the data

collection plan, the instruments, and the data organization plan. This section also included a

detailed discussion of each data collection and organization phase.

Data Collection Plan

Before developing the data collection plan, researchers must have research questions to

code for data analysis and suggest an investigation approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore,

the central question contained sub-questions to ensure accurate data collection. The questions

evolved and were open-ended, equally effective in every direction. Determining the data to

collect required looking at the research questions and sub-questions. I sought to determine the

effect nonprofit board governance has on operations first by identifying how the roles and

responsibilities of the board impact operations. Answering this question required participants to

discuss the actions and behaviors that contributed to board success and those actions or behaviors

that hindered effective board governance. Zollo et al. (2019) denoted that the board's

performance can affect the function and organization's outcome.

The board can influence organizational strategies; therefore, understanding how the lack

of board governance affects leadership and management roles is essential. I asked participants

(EDs and CEOs) to describe the primary challenges for leaders and managers with inadequate

boards and to identify beneficial elements to ensure the success of managers and leaders.

Scholarly researchers suggest that actively engaged boards influence the direction and

performance of an organization (Nahum & Carneli, 2020). Ineffective boards can cause the

organization's dynamics to change, impeding programs and making it difficult to obtain funding.

(Puyvelde et al., 2018) Puyvelde et al. (2018) indicated that the board chair's leadership is

instrumental to the board's functioning and that the chair must create an environment conducive

to the board's engagement. The findings revealed that the chair's position is critical to the board and influential in setting the tone. The chair is a gatekeeper who guides board members in setting the organization's direction (Freiwirth, 2017 & Puyvelde et al., 2018). This information emerged in the study findings. I asked participants (board directors) to explain how the board chair influences board governance and what characteristics of a chair are essential to effectiveness. This question allowed participants to identify the effect of board chairs on members and the traits crucial for board leadership. The findings identified the chair's role as crucial to maintaining board governance and ensuring members adhered to their roles and responsibilities as directors. The findings also revealed that board chairs should actively organize and articulate. Board chairs must also remain present and consistent in their leadership responsibilities. Therefore, the questions asked during data collection were essential to identifying the chair's effect on governance and the traits necessary for the board chair.

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), interviews are a primary collection methodology for gathering qualitative data. Interviews can occur in groups or individually. In addition, the interview process varies depending on the number of people the researcher will involve, the structure level, the proximity of the interviewer to participants, and the number of interviews the researcher must conduct (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). I used a semi-structured interview format. This process allowed for specific questions and probes during the interview process (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Cooper and Schindler (2014) suggested that interviewers have training. I have extensive interviewing experience and skills obtained from previous employment. This asset helped streamline the interview process. After the initial interview, integrating member checking and conducting follow-up interviews to validate responses and ensure accuracy was necessary.

In addition to interviews, a survey was necessary to collect board governance data. Cooper and Schindler (2014) proposed three communication approaches: self-administered, telephone, and survey through personal interviews. Although each communication approach has advantages and disadvantages, I used an online application for the surveys that allowed for creation, encryption, and confidentiality. Participants could complete and submit the survey online using a unique password that ensured confidentiality. To ensure validity and reliability, I used two methods of data of data collection.

Instruments

Interview Guides

I used several instruments to conduct the study: an interview guide and surveys. I conducted interviews using the semi-structured interview guide to answer several inquiries relating to the research questions. The project contained two interview guides, one for board directors and the other for EDs and CEOs of nonprofit organizations. The interview guides answered three research questions. The first question was: How do the roles and responsibilities of the board impact internal operations? The second question was: How does the lack of board governance affect leadership and management roles? The third question was: What effect does the board leadership have on board governance?

The first and the third questions were for board directors (See Appendix A). I asked participants about their years of experience with nonprofit boards and the current board. Although this question was not open-ended, the goal was to gather their years of experience to determine if that impacted governance. The question asking participants to identify board actions and behaviors that contribute to successful governance and organizational performance appears

in (Appendix A). In addition, I also asked participants to identify the board's actions and behaviors that impeded progress.

Moreover, to understand the effect of the board chair on board governance, I asked participants for their thoughts on the chair's leadership by providing examples of leadership styles or competencies that cause ineffective governance. The last question of the interview guide was for board directors, who were asked to identify challenges facing boards today. The second interview guide was for EDs and CEOs of nonprofit organizations (See Appendix B). This section reflected research questions regarding board governance in leadership and management roles. I asked participants about the effect of board governance on their roles and what board practices assisted in accomplishing organizational goals. The following question pertained to the ED and CEO's performance. The first question was: Identify qualities, actions, or behaviors of the board chair that helped their performance. The second question was regarding the negative impact of board governance on the organization. The third question to participants was identifying ways board governance impedes the organization's performance.

Surveys

Surveys are another form of data collection researchers use to record responses to questions from study participants. They are also a form of measurement researchers use to collect data in a structured interview, often during a personal interview (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Researchers carefully select or craft questions in a sequence for study participants. The primary goal of a survey is to compare similarities and differences in the participants' responses. The guidelines for this study required using an existing study with proven reliability and validity. The researchers at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business in Stanford, California, conducted the research. The survey authors are Stanford University School of Business

professors. Collaborating with Board Source and GuideStar, the professors surveyed 924

directors of nonprofit organizations about their board practices, structure, and composition.

Although I used questions from the survey, specific questions aligned with the project, to obtain

the best possible results, the research included five sections of questions from the Stanford

survey. The five sections are (a) demographics, (b) structure of the board, (c) executive Director

or Chief Executive Officer, (d) Donations and Fundraising, and (e) Organizational Performance

(Appendix C).

Demographics

The demographic questions asked participants the nature of their organization's primary

activities, main funding sources, the organization's years of existence, and motivations behind

their decision to join the board. Although this data does not align with the research questions,

knowing this information will help me compare the populations based on their services, funding

sources, and years of existence. The survey also included asking participants about their

motivation behind joining the board. The final questions in demographics ask participants about

the number of nonprofits and for-profits they serve and if serving on nonprofit boards opens

opportunities to serve on for-profit boards (Appendix C).

Structure

The structure of the board section included questions asking participants about the

number of directors who serve on the board and how well the board members understand the

organization's mission and strategy (Appendix C). Ensuring the organization achieves its mission

and strategy is critical to organizational leadership. Boards engaging in strategic decision-making

can positively influence the organization's performance (Nahum & Carneli, 2020). However, the

opposite can impact how well executive leaders perform. Organization leaders must have

strategic direction to convey the mission or influence staff. Therefore, this was a valuable question to ask participants that aligns with the research question about the roles and responsibilities of the board impacting internal operations. Piscitelli et al. (2020) posited that board directors have a fiduciary responsibility to the organization and stakeholders. Failing to understand their obligations can hinder leadership and management roles.

The survey included questions asking participants about their experience as directors and their engagement level on the board (Appendix C). The response to the questions allowed me to understand if participants were aware of their roles and responsibilities and their impact on internal operations. Another question in the structure section asked participants if the board had committees and if the structure improved functionality and decision-making. Finally, the survey asked participants if the board reviews data and information to evaluate the organization's performance and if the data was financial or non-financial. Finally, I asked participants how often the board reviews the organization's strategy and performance (Appendix C). The board chair is the gatekeeper and substantially influences the board's functioning. These questions may help answer question three of the study about the board chair's effect on governance.

Donation and Fundraising

The donation and fundraising section of the survey included questions asking participants about personal contributions, their fundraising efforts, and whether the organization had a give-or-get policy that required each board member to donate or raise a specific amount (Appendix C). Board directors' fiduciary responsibility often requires them to contribute and fundraise; this question aligns with the research question about board members' understanding of their roles and responsibilities as directors.

Organizational Performance

The organizational performance questionnaire contained two questions about the board directors' satisfaction with the organization's performance and about problems or difficulties, their organizations have experienced in the last ten years (Appendix C). This information will help me identify problems caused by ineffective board governance while answering question three about the board chair's effect on governance.

Data Organization Plan

Managing and organizing the data was essential to the research study. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted that researchers organize data by using digital files and developing a file name system to locate the data quickly. Creswell and Poth identified three analytic strategies and outcomes for managing and organizing data. The first strategy is to prepare files and units for a file naming system and organize files using a database. The second strategy is to ensure an ongoing secure process for storing files by creating a long-term plan for file storage. The third strategy is to select a mode of analysis using software, hybrid, or hand process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Researchers can use a spreadsheet to collect information, such as the participant's number and date of data collection, to locate data efficiently and ensure data accessibility. Creswell and Poth (2018) posited that some researchers use spreadsheets to collect information, locate data efficiently, and ensure data accessibility. I filed and stored hard copies of interview guides in a locked filing cabinet alphabetically by the nonprofit's name based on the participant's number.

I also scanned each document to create an electronic copy and identify a file name for storage. Storing data on a Universal Serial Bus (USB) drive and the cloud was critical for long-term storage. The removable USB device allowed me to access, store, and manage the data using computers and peripherals (https://techterms.com/definition/usb). I locked the USB in the file cabinet. Additionally, Cloud storage comprises a similar long-term storage system that allows the

researcher to access, store, manage, and share data anytime and from different devices (Yang et al., 2020). The storage systems were beneficial for long-term access and long-term data. In addition to organizing files, Creswell and Poth (2018) noted that researchers convert the data and determine how to secure it in the long term. Managing and organizing the data was the first step in the data analysis spiral; however, comparing files requires a software program. The dates analysis will include this topic. The data organization plan discussed allowed me to manage and organize the data efficiently and ensure efficient long-term storage.

Summary of Data Collection & Organization

The data collection and organization process were instrumental in the study. The study's data collection and organization process consisted of three components: the instruments, the data collection, and the data organization plan. I had to ensure the right collection plan, instruments, and organization plan were in place to obtain accurate results from the study. The data collection plan used interview guides and an approved, valid, and reliable survey to answer the research questions. I created two interview guides, one for board directors and the other for EDs and CEOs. The study's survey was another data collection format created by the Sanford University School of Business in Stanford, California. The survey comprised five sections. The first section included demographics. The second section included the structure of the board. The third section included ED/CEO. The fourth section included donations and fundraising. The fifth section included organizational Performance. Each section assisted me with the study's research question.

After obtaining the data from the interview guides and survey, I implemented the data organization plan to manage, organize, and store the data. Using a spreadsheet, I inputted the participant's number and date of collection and stored the spreadsheet, interview guides, and

surveys in a locked file cabinet, on a USB drive, and in the Cloud. The data organization plan

protected the identity of participants, organizations, and data for the study.

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

Analyzing text could challenge qualitative researchers because data analysis involves

multiple tasks (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The process consists of different steps that interconnect

and form a continuous cycle of activities that comprise the data analysis process, and authors

consider the five approaches to inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The spiral of activities involves

managing and organizing data, reading and memoing emergent ideas, describing and classifying

codes into themes, developing accessing interpretations, and representing and visualizing the

data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This section includes a discussion concerning the cycle of

activities and explains the process for ensuring reliability and validity in the research study.

Emergent Ideas

After I completed the data organization, the following step required reading and

memoing emergent ideas. The analytic strategies in emergent ideas were to ensure three tasks

occurred. The task included notetaking, sketching reflective thinking, and summarizing field

notes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These activities lead to analytic outcomes, such as written

memos for coding, which allow reflection on ideas and summaries across files or formulate

questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Memos consisted of short phases of ideas or concepts.

Memos also allowed the researcher to create a digital trail for investigation and recovery

(Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth identified three types of memos: segment,

document, and project. Segment memos allow researchers to capture ideas from reading specific

phrases in the data. Segment memos are beneficial for identifying the initial codes in the process

and have some similarities to precoding.

Document memos allow researchers to capture concepts from an individual file or a format for documenting ideas from reviewing multiple files. Alternatively, project memos capture the integration of ideas across concepts or show how multiple concepts can work together across the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I utilized document memos to summarize and identify code categories in the memos. I retrieved and sorted the memos. Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated that researchers should retrieve and sort data regardless of factors such as time, the content of the research, and the type of participant.

Coding Themes

Following reading the memo, I described and classified codes into themes, which was the next step. Creswell and Poth (2018) proposed that the heart of data analysis was coding themes. Using their views, researchers create detailed reports, develop themes for coding, and provide an understanding of the meaning of the codes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The process of detailing descriptions occurs when researchers visually describe the research. However, coding involves collecting data from interviewing and observing participants or viewing documents (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Coding requires aggregating the data into smaller categories while obtaining evidence for the code from a database and assigning a label to the code (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

However, researchers use only some of the information and winnow some data. Winnowing data comprises discarding unused information (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The winnowing process allows researchers to develop shorter lists of tentative codes for coding, which the authors recommend (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Integrating lean coding, a shorter list, allows researchers to begin with fewer categories and expand throughout the review process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth recommend that the final code list consists of 25 to 30 categories (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This final list of codes and descriptions provides the basis of a codebook that plays an instrumental role in assessing inter-rater reliability among several codes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The codebook should contain a name, a description of the code that defines the boundaries, and an example of the code from the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study contained 37 codes from the data of executive leaders (CEOs and EDs) and 29 codes from the data of the board of directors. After completing the coding process, researchers classify the data by dissecting the text and searching for categories, themes, or dimensions of information (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The process also requires the identification of general themes, which researchers aggregate to develop a common theme (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth suggested several strategies for creating and exploring themes, such as using memoing to capture emerging thematic ideas, highlighting quotes in the coding process, creating diagrams to and represent relationships among different codes or concepts. Additionally, Creswell and Poth proposed drafting summary statements reflective of recurring aspects of the data. Four themes emerged from the codes for each participant group.

Interpretations

Developing and accessing interpretations was the next step in the spiral of activities that helped me understand the data. Researchers must carefully judge the meaningful patterns, themes, and categories generated by the analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The goal was to obtain the more significant meaning of data; therefore, abstracting beyond the codes and themes was critical for interpreting the data. The process required three parts, including developing and forming codes and themes. The third part includes organizing the themes into larger units of abstraction to make sense of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The process also required the

researcher to use strategies to locate patterns, develop stories, summaries, or statements, and clearly articulate the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Representation

The final step in the spiral of activities consists of data representation, which comprises representing and visualizing the data. Creswell and Poth (2018) identified several methods for representing data, such as a comparison table, matrix, or hierarchical tree diagram. Creswell and Poth identified five strategies to assist researchers in displaying data beyond matrices. The five strategies included searching and selecting the level and type of data and sketching and seeking feedback on the initial sketching, (c) assessing completeness and readability, and modifying when necessary. The process includes note patterns, possible comparisons, and clusters in the display, reviewing accompanying text, and verifying conclusions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Analysis for Triangulation

Cooper and Schindler (2014) stated that triangulation combines qualitative or quantitative methods. Robson and McCartan (2016) posited triangulation as a valuable strategy that enhances the accuracy of research and assists with encountering threats of validity. However, triangulation includes the possibility of differences and disagreements with data (Robson & McCartan, 2016). For example, the study included interviews and surveys. However, the participants may disagree about a particular situation, causing a contradiction in the data. In addition, findings from different methods differ, making triangulation challenging to compare (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Nonetheless, I incorporated data triangulation. Data triangulation allowed for more data collection methods: interviews and surveys (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Triangulation can also occur during the coding process because the inquirer can look at different sources of information

to find themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Triangulation is viewing data from different sources during the study. Researchers can choose from various quantitative analysis methods. Quantitative analysis can accomplish three things: measuring differences between two groups, determining the relationship between two variables, and testing hypotheses (Morgan et al., 2020). Morgan et al. (2020) suggested using group comparison for randomized, quasi-experimental, and comparative approaches. However, determining the relationship between two variables, also known as relational, is associational (Morgan et al., 2020). Researchers test hypotheses using a descriptive approach. Morgan et al. (2020) identified three statistical types: difference, associational, and descriptive conclusions. The research question determines the type of statistical approach the researcher will use. The quantitative method was not appropriate for the study.

Summary of Data Analysis

This process was crucial in research because data analysis summarizes the collected data. Data analysis involved activities that managed and organized data, read and memo emergent ideas, described and classified codes into themes, developed and assessed interpretations, and represented and visualized the data. Reading and memos helped me reflect on ideas, summarize across several files, and formulate questions. Researchers can select three types of memos: segment, document, and project. However, the researcher must retrieve and sort data across time, content, data form, and participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I used a document memo to accomplish the memoing process.

Data analysis also requires coding themes, which require the researcher to collect data by interviewing and observing participants or viewing documents (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I aggregated the data into smaller categories. In most studies, the researcher uses only some of the

information and integrates the process of winnowing, which is developing a shorter list of tentative coding (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, the final code list in this study was 37 codes for executive leaders and 29 codes for board directors to formulate the codebook. I classified the data and dissected the text to search for categories, themes, or dimensions. To understand the data, the researcher developed and assessed interpretations by judging the analysis's patterns, themes, and categories (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher abstracts beyond the codes and themes to obtain the most significant meaning. Data representation was the final step, which included representing and visualizing the data through various methods like comparison tables, matrixes, or tree diagrams. The researcher determines which method to use to display the data. This process can sometimes create a challenge; however, researchers use several strategies to identify the best option. Although triangulation was not a step in the data analysis activities, the process allows researchers to combine qualitative and quantitative methods. Triangulation is valuable as it enhances the research's accuracy and helps with possible validity threats. I used data triangulation through interviews and surveys to conduct this study.

Reliability and Validity

According to Adler (2022), all research must possess trustworthiness to maintain relevance. The quantitative method was more trustworthy because of its rigorous method of finding a relationship between numbers, making it more credible (Alder, 2022). However, Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed the perspectives of Lincoln and Guba, who proposed changing the terminology of reliability and validity to enhance the research study. Some authors prefer to use those terms but replace reliability with creditability, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and validity with bracketing, triangulation, and saturation (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Adler (2022) posited that obtaining a study's trustworthiness required evaluating

creditability, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Robson and McCartan proposed that trustworthiness was critical to evaluating qualitative research and clarity (Alder, 2020). Therefore, a discussion of the plan and process will occur to obtain reliability and validity in the study.

Reliability

Ensuring reliability in the study was imperative for credibility. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted that the researcher can enhance reliability by using quality recording devices and transcribing digital files obtained through field notes. In qualitative research, reliability allows researchers to focus on the coding process. Reliability comprises the strength of the participants' answers for data analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Developing codes and assessing the reliability among coders is crucial in the analysis process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Reliability occurs when researchers use multiple coders. An explanation of how the study will include reliability by integrating creditability, transferability, dependability, and confirmability is in this section. Credibility was a method used to obtain reliability in the study. The process includes member checking through the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Member checking involves verifying the researcher's interpretations of the study (Stahl & King, 2020). The IRB will have a copy of the study results to verify the data's accuracy. However, Stahl and King (2020) proposed using participants by providing a pre-publication copy to review the write-ups and provide constructive feedback for creditability.

In addition, researchers include transferability, which allows transferring findings and insights between contexts to understand better (Stahl & King, 2020). Researchers can establish transferability by providing evidence that the study findings apply to other contexts (Stahl & King, 2020). In addition, researchers also integrate thick descriptions, which provide a detailed

description of the participants, methods, or procedures used in the data collection process. Dependability is critical to ensuring reliability and requires the research process to be rational, traceable, and well-documented (Nowell et al., 2017). Readers must examine the research process so that researchers can accomplish the study's dependability (Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher can also incorporate auditing to ensure dependability. Nowell et al. (2017) suggested developing an audit trail that provides readers with evidence regarding the decisions and choices of the researcher, including theoretical and methodological issues. The researcher must maintain raw data records and a reflexive journal to cross-reference data (Nowell et al., 2017).

Confirmability was another aspect crucial to ensuring reliability. Confirmability requires the researcher to show how conclusions and interpretations occur explicitly (Nowell et al., 2017). Researchers can establish confirmability after achieving creditability, transferability, and dependability. Nowell et al. (2017) asserted that markers should assist with informing them about how and why particular decisions occurred during the study. I ensured confirmability by establishing and achieving each aspect of reliability.

Validity

According to Robson and McCartan (2016), validity involves the process of something being accurate. I focused on typology for the study because no potential for threats to validity in flexible designs occurred. According to Robson and McCartan (2016), typology includes description, interpretation, and theory. The typology's primary threat to validity was to ensure an accurate description. Ensuring the survey and interview information was accurate and complete using effective notetaking and documentation was necessary to minimize this threat. Interpretation was another area that threatened validity. Researchers continually track the data and justify the steps to ensure an accurate interpretation (Robson & McCartan, 2016). I

documented the steps from the beginning to the end of the data interpretation. Robson and McCartan (2016) noted that theory threatens a study's validity. This threat occurs because of bias and rigor. Therefore, I did not have personal relationships with the participants. The study setting for interviews was unfamiliar to minimize potential threats to validity. In addition to using typology, I included bracketing, triangulation, and saturation. Bracketing occurs when the researcher can set aside personal experiences and biases to integrate a new and fresh perspective on research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I focused on the participants' experiences by bracketing their personal views during the study. Although this process was challenging, I intentionally integrated bracketing during the interview to mitigate biases.

Triangulation includes multiple data in a study to increase the research's rigor and attain validity (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Researchers use this process to obtain credibility and reliability by identifying patterns in the field (Stahl & King, 2020). Identifying patterns helped researchers to determine how the findings connect and share a relationship, which also helped with creditability (Stahl & King, 2020). Triangulation includes multiple sources and assists with potential threats to validity. I integrated data and theory triangulation for the study. Data triangulation included two methods of data collection: interviews and a survey.

Saturation occurred when no substantial-quality data for the study occurred. To ensure saturation, I included several processes. For example, I ensured the data was rich and thick. Fusch and Ness (2015) proposed a difference between rich and thick data. Rich data consists of quality, and thick includes quantity, indicating that the researcher has valuable data for the study. Using interviews and surveys (data triangulation) enhanced the study's validity and assisted in reaching saturation. Fusch and Ness (2015) suggested a link between data triangulation and data

saturation, which ensures the other occurs. Therefore, triangulation results in data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Bracketing

According to Tufford and Newman (2012), bracketing allows researchers to alleviate the possibility of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research. Bracketing includes fresh ideas to expand and enhance the study's rigor (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Several bracketing methods to address bias ensured the validity of the study, such as writing memos and engaging in interviews. Writing memos and conducting interviews were two necessary bracketing methods to implement, mitigate bias, and enhance validity. Memo writing also occurred during the data collection process, during which I examined and reflected on engagement (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Memos help researchers obtain essential insights into acknowledging and foregrounding preconceptions (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Engaging participants during the interview was another form of bracketing that allowed probing participants for additional information. I asked questions and verified participants' responses through probing. This process assisted with clarification and understanding of the responses to enhance reliability and validity.

Summary of Reliability and Validity

Quantitative research is more credible because finding a relationship between numbers is rigorous (Adler, 2022). However, Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested using Lincoln and Guba's perspectives on qualitative research to enhance the study's reliability and validity. The perspective includes replacing the reliability terminology with creditability, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Lincoln and Guba's perspectives include replacing validity with bracketing, triangulation, and saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study included achieving creditability through triangulation. Obtaining accuracy will require integrating rich and thick data descriptions while developing an audit trail to provide evidence to readers. This process assisted in accomplishing the study's transferability and dependability. In addition, maintaining a reflexive journal to cross-reference data, including raw data, also establishes dependability. Furthermore, I demonstrated to readers by including markers how and why decisions achieve confirmability. Validity is crucial for a qualitative study and involves the process of bracketing, triangulation, and saturation. The potential threats included setting aside personal experiences and biases. I bracketed out personal views and focused on the participants to mitigate perceptions by writing memos and engaging in the interviews by probing participants to seek clarification. Integrating data and theory triangulation, including interviews and a survey, will help obtain saturation.

Summary of Section 2 and Transition

Researchers who seek to study a particular phenomenon must identify a problem or an issue that potentially exists and develop research questions that address the problem. The goal requires researchers to answer the questions using a methodology that describes the design, chosen method, and the triangulation process. The study also included participants, population, and sampling size. In addition to these aspects, data collection and analysis were instrumental to the study. The problem in this study was the lack of effective board governance, which resulted in organizational challenges.

The qualitative methodology includes a flexible design incorporating a single case study. The study participants included board directors, EDs, and CEOs of nonprofit organizations in the Hampton Roads area. The sampling method was purposive because the selected participants had the most knowledge about the phenomenon. In addition, researchers can reach saturation with a

sample size between 9 and 17 in experimental research (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). I used a sample size of 20 participants. The data collection and organization process comprised a data collection plan, which integrated multiple sources to collect the data, including interview guides and surveys that have proven reliable and valid.

The data organization plan included managing and organizing information using a spreadsheet containing the participants' numbers and the collection date. The storage method for the data was a locked file cabinet, electronically transmitted through the cloud and a USB drive. To ensure data analysis, the study contained multiple activities, which included reading and memoing emergent ideas and describing and classifying codes into themes. In addition, representing, visualizing, developing, and assessing the interpretations of the data was necessary. To obtain reliability and validity, I sought to achieve credibility through transferability by transferring findings from one context to another for better understanding. In addition, I maintained an audit trail to achieve dependability and confirmability. I demonstrated how to reach conclusions and interpretations—assuring validity required bracketing preconceptions and integrating triangulation and saturation, which involved using multiple rich and thick data sources.

After data collection and analysis, I transitioned to applying professional practice and implications for change. In this section, I provided an overview of the study and present the findings, including themes discovered and the interpretation of those themes. I also provided representation and visualization of the data, the relationship of the findings, and application to professional practice to improve general business practice and potential application strategies. I concluded with recommendations for further study and reflections, including personal and professional growth and a biblical perspective.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Section three presents a comprehensive study overview, highlighting the crucial findings, emerging themes, and interrelationships. This section also includes the practical implications of these findings, suggesting potential strategies for improvement and areas for further research. The concluding remarks offer personal and professional reflections and a Christian Worldview perspective, adding a unique dimension to the discussion.

Overview of the Study

Effective board governance is a crucial determinant of an organization's operations and its ultimate success or failure. To deliver quality services and sustain operations, nonprofit organizations must have capable leaders and board directors who align with their mission and vision. Understanding their roles and responsibilities is crucial for maintaining the boundaries between the board and the CEO or ED, ensuring the organization's long-term viability, particularly in a post-pandemic landscape.

However, board directors who lack training and experience can hinder the board's progress (Freiwirth, 2017). Researchers also propose that neglecting board responsibilities can result in the organization performing poorly (Zollo et al., 2019). The problem is that the perpetual challenges of board governance can impact operations. Therefore, the study included determining the effects of board governance on operations by addressing three questions. The first question was, how do the roles and responsibilities of the board impact operations? The second question was, how does the lack of board governance affect leadership and management roles? The third question was, how does the board chair leadership affect board governance?

To ensure the study's objectivity, I interviewed 20 participants within two groups: 10 EDs and CEOs of nonprofit organizations and 10 nonprofit board directors. In addition to the

interviews, the board of directors also participated in a confidential survey. The participants responded to questions aligned with the research problem. The interview recording and transcribing method was through NVivo qualitative software to identify the codes and develop themes from the raw data. The survey comprised 26 questions divided into four sections: demographic information, board structure, donations and fundraising, and organizational performance. Multiple themes derived from the coding process. This section will provide background information on the board participants. The section will include a thematic analysis and an exhaustive discussion of the findings. This section will also include interpreting the themes, data visualization, and the relationship between the findings. In addition, this section included the research questions, conceptual framework, anticipated themes, literature review, and the problem.

Presentation of the Findings

The study reflected on NPOs in the Hampton Roads area. The participants included executive leaders, CEOs and EDs, and a board of directors with extensive nonprofit experience. Each organization operated under the 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt provision of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The NPOs also operate under a mission and purpose that benefits the public and furthers a social cause.

Background Information of Participants

This section of the study included background information on the survey participants, ten nonprofit board directors who completed an anonymous survey and had experience in board governance. The survey covered demographics, board structure, donations and fundraising, and organizational performance. This section will begin with the board's demographics.

Demographics

Demographically, approximately 50% of the participants served on educational nonprofit boards for more than 50 years. Federal, state, or local governments represent 40% of their funding sources. Nearly 20% of the participants served on social or legal services boards. Thirty percent of their primary funding sources are charitable contributions or grant-making public charities. The remaining 30% served on health services, religious, or other boards with primary funding sources also from philanthropic contributions (See Table 3).

Nearly all directors (90%) joined a board to serve an organization and contribute to its success. Only 10% became members because the organization asked them to join. Each participant served on at least one board; however, 10% were on eight, and another 10% were on six or five. Thirty percent served on one board and 20% on three or two. Only 50% of the participants were members of for-profit boards. Nearly 90% of the board believes serving on a nonprofit board presents opportunities to serve on for-profit boards (See Table 3).

Structure of the Board

Board structure revealed that a significant majority of 70 % of nonprofit directors served on a board with 15 or fewer members, and those directors believed the present number was correct. However, 20% served on a board with between 15 and 20 members and believed the present number was adequate. However, 10% of the participants who served on a board between 25 and 30 members thought the amount was slightly large (See Table 3).

While 70 % of the participants indicated that the board members understood the organization's mission and strategy very well, 20% stated exceptionally well, 10% moderately well, and another 70% also understood their obligations very well as board members. Twenty percent stated exceptionally well, and 10 % moderately well. These percentages are conducive to board experience because over 60 % of participants were experienced in nonprofit boards. Thirty

percent were moderately experienced, and 10% were highly experienced (See Table 3). Additionally, 50 % of the participants served on boards where directors were engaged based on time dedicated to fulfilling obligations. Another 40% had directors moderately engaged, and 10 % were slightly engaged. Moreover, 50% have a board with a board, while the other 50% do not use the concept, although 90% believed this structure improved board functionality (See Table 3). The board within a board concept comprises a formal executive board or informal board.

All directors (100 %) review financial and non-financial data and information to evaluate the organization's performance. Regarding strategy, 80% of the directors review the organization's strategy annually, 10% more frequently than annually, and 10% every two years. Regarding performance, 50% of the directors evaluate their performance annually, 50% semi-annually, monthly, or never (See Table 3).

Donations and Fundraising

Donations and fundraising were also a category in the survey. Each participant (100%) personally donated to their organization, which is a requirement for 80%. Regarding the give-or-get policy, 50% of the participants served in organizations that do not integrate into the give-or-get policy. However, the remaining 50% had to give or get donations. The same applied to fundraising; 50% had to fundraise on behalf of the organization, and 50% served on boards that did not require fundraising (See Table 3).

Organizational Performance

Organizational performance comprised two questions about the organization's performance and asked participants about their satisfaction. At least 50% of the participants were moderately satisfied with their organization's performance, 40% were very satisfied, and 10% were dissatisfied. A question for the participants was about their organization's difficulties within

the last ten years. A significant amount (60%) had difficulties meeting fundraising targets. Another 40% had difficulties attracting board members, and 10% asked the ED to leave the organization. The other 10% had an unexpected resignation from the ED (See Table 3).

According to Roshayani et al. (2018), board directors who do not understand their obligations fail to engage in governance. However, the survey suggested that board directors who understand the organization's mission and strategy are very engaged. Furthermore, engaged board members are more likely to fulfill their financial obligation to the board. Board members with experience were also engaged to ensure adequate board governance. Overall, the survey provided extensive information about the board participants that supported the interviews.

Themes Discovered

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the transcript comprises raw data that reemerges as a theme. Determining the themes required a process that began with interviewing participants. The transcripts were set up for coding through NVivo qualitative software after the interview process. The text included listing and grouping to eliminate redundancy. The study consisted of two types of participants; therefore, I created two projects through NVivo qualitative software using the transcripts of the CEOs and EDs, the other of which comprised board directors.

Thirty-seven codes emerged from the CEOs' and EDs' transcripts and 29 from the board director's transcripts. Themes emerged from the codes, and I wrote a passage for each theme to develop a narrative that would tie them together. I also integrated the winnowing process of discarding information to create shorter lists, which Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended.

Each participant received specific coding to ensure the findings provided a robust thematic analysis. The CEO and ED participants' coding ranged from one to ten. However, the board of directors began at eleven to twenty. Four themes emerged through the coding process in

each group of participants: CEOs and EDs comprised of (a) a working board, (b) efficacy elements, (c) values that create positive outcomes, and (d) theories that contribute to success. The board of directors' themes, participants eleven to twenty, included (a) actions that hinder success, (b) governance, (c) chair effects, and (d) efficacy elements.

Themes Discovered from the CEOs and EDs (Participants 1-10)

Emergent Theme 1: Working Board

Working board was a discovered theme in the interview data of the executive leaders (CEO and ED). Each participant proposed that organizations that perform well have working boards (P1-P10). The participants agreed with Jaskyte (2018), who researched highly effective organizations with proactive and interactive boards open to dialogue and debate (P1-P10). Several participants defined working boards as members who participated in committees, became involved in discussions, and created scorecards to grade their performance (P1, P4, P5, P8, & P9). However, the research literature does not define a working board.

Many participants had boards with standing or subcommittees (P1, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, & P10). P8 denoted, "Yes, we have five standing committees: governance, executive, finance, and development, and the program and services committee." In addition, "Working boards contributed meaningful gifts to the organization through various resources or personal contributions, according to several participants" (P1, P2, P4, P5, P8, & P9). Many participants defined meaningful gifts as "Give what you can" (P1, P3, P5, P8, & P9). The research does not support or elaborate on meaningful gifts, although Parsa et al. (2022) indicated that governance quality drives donations and governance practices. P1 denoted, "The most engaged person on your board who loves the work you do and advocates for you on the highest level may not have the deepest pockets, which is why we mandate 100% giving, but a meaningful gift."

Emergent Theme 2: Efficacy Elements

Efficacy comprised roles, responsibilities, board practices, financial management, and diversity. The data findings revealed efficacy when board members understood their roles and responsibilities and implemented processes aligned with the mission. All participants supported this viewpoint and proposed that this view was critical to effectiveness (P1-P10). Mason and Kim's (2020) research supported the findings and suggested that board members who lacked knowledge about their roles and responsibilities failed to govern effectively. P6 stated, "When the board focuses on their roles and responsibilities, I know how to govern my tasks, and it minimizes interceding into operations."

P9 agrees with the notion and added, "Sometimes board members want to step into the other lane when they don't understand their role." Each participant agrees with the literature stating that effective board governance requires understanding roles and responsibilities (Mason & Kim, 2020), (P1-P10). P4 asserted, "Our current government policies very clearly delineate the boards and the CEO's roles, and each board member receives a manual with the job description, constitution and bylaws, and government contract information." P4 agreed with Woodroof et al. (2021) that they must invest in board member training and development. Participants concurred with Mathews' (2019) position that not defining roles creates confusion, role conflict, and stress, which causes operation issues (P1-P10).

Board practices occurred by participants as an element that creates efficacy (P1-P10). Board practices comprised strategic management and financial management processes that improved organizational performance. Each participant noted that strategic planning was a primary board practice that shaped the organization's direction (P1-P10). The participant's viewpoint concurs with Dmitry et al.'s (2021) findings that the board provides strategic direction

that allows sustainability. Participants also expressed, "Strategic management was more than planning and consisted of several components including evaluation and control." (P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, & P9). The participant's perspective concurred with Dmitry et al. (2021) research that proposed strategic management comprises strategy formulation, implementation, strategic planning, evaluation, and control (p1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, &P9).

P8 noted, "I talked to them about where we are heading as an organization, and we need the strategic plan to help us get there." P8 insight coincided with Miller's (2018) finding that strategic management assists organizations in accomplishing organizational goals and communication. Each participant agrees with Dmitry et al. (2021) research that board members must engage in the strategic management process to understand the organization's direction (P1-P10).

Financial management was also a critical board practice of nonprofit board governance that comprises members understanding their fiduciary responsibility to the organization. Each participant believed that board members must ensure that the organization's finances are appropriately managed and that financial officers maintain good records (P1-P10). However, participants do not concur with Stühlinger's (2022) research that the complexity of financial management makes it difficult for financial planning and control (P1-P10). P1 noted, "The finance committee ensured we have a budget every year, so we know or have a sense of what we're anticipating with various costs like payroll and facility improvement." P1 opinion aligns with Weisberg's (2019) findings that the board has a fiduciary responsibility to monitor the costs and goals of the organization. Several participants proposed that the finance committee oversees the financials, but executive leaders are also responsible for the organization (P1, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, & 10), although the research does not support the participant's perspective.

Diverse boards create an environment conducive to efficacy. Each participant concurred that diverse boards improve board governance (P1-P10). Several participants suggested that diverse boards comprise members with different experience levels, skill sets, and qualifications (P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, & P9). The participant's view on diverse boards supports Roshayani et al.'s (2018) findings that suggest effective boards require members with various skill sets, personalities, and experience.

P4 also suggested, "Diverse included members who represent different ethnicity, perspectives, and institutions and the board should reflect the population they serve," which correlated to the research literature of Roshayani et al. (2018). P5 agreed with P4 and proposed that the board reflect the population served. Roshayani et al. (2018) proposed that diverse boards with expertise perform better; however, the opposite can impede progress. Many participants agreed with Roshayani et al.'s (2018) findings that diversity enriched the board and its progress (P1, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, & P10).

Emergent Theme 3: Values that Create Positive Outcomes

Communication was a value discovered in the findings that created positive outcomes. Participants identified several values that assisted executive leaders in being effective and created positive outcomes for the organization. Each participant agreed that communication was vital in creating positive outcomes (P1-P10). P1 denoted, "Good nonprofit leaders have open communication and a good relationship with the board and chair of the board." P8 supported this view and implied, "Communication is the key to having an engaged, productive board."

P8 concluded, "Executive leaders must build trust with the board members." P1 and P8's notions of communication being instrumental in the relationship between the board and executive leader supported Bruni-Bossi et al.'s (2016) research proposing that EDs and board

members must have an excellent role-performance relationship to ensure good governance. P8 and P9 also believed weekly updates enhanced communication and built trust between the board and executive leader.

Several participants considered their board relationship a partnership instead of a boss or overseer (P1, P4, P8, P9, & P10). Matthews (2019) indicated that board governance requires a partnership between the board chair and ED, where the two-practice power-sharing supports the participant's viewpoint (P1, P4, P8, P9, & P10). The participants believed two-practice power-sharing (partnership) created values that led to positive outcomes and buy-in from the board.

The findings also revealed transparency, which created values that led to positive outcomes. Many participants considered transparency critical to governance and the executive leader's performance (P1-10). P3 stated, "We were intentional about transparency and replaced the partitions with glass windows to open up the office." P3 also noted, "Transparency was crucial to the leader and stakeholders." P3 perception supports Woodroof et al. (2021) argued that transparency garners the trust of all stakeholders.

P2 agreed with P3 and Woodroof et al. (2021) literature but also included, "We hope that the person is honest and provides a transparent perspective." Participants agreed with Woodroof et al. (2021) research that "Transparency must be disseminated throughout the organization and external environment" (P1-P10). Participants also agreed with Woodroof et al.'s (2021) literature, stating that "transparency increases donor participation and fundraising efforts."

Emergent Theme 4: Theories that Contribute to Success

Resource dependency theory allows leaders to identify and access external resources. Data findings revealed that leadership theories and resource dependency theories contributed to the success of governance. Valldeneu et al. (2021) found that several leadership styles

contributed to performance in organizational outcomes. Several participants viewed their board

as a tremendous resource that makes connections in the community (P2, P4, P5, & P6). P6 noted,

"I need my board to gather and contact those resources." Madhani (2017) asserted that resource

dependency theory focuses on identifying and accessing resources outside the organization,

supporting the research findings. Sustainability requires access to critical external resources for

survivability (Madhani, 2017).

P1 stated, "If the board member does not have personal funds to donate, they may have

access to external resources that can help the organization." P1 provided an example, "We may

have to find another building for programs, and the individual is a realtor." "The person may be

able to locate a building to support the programs." P1 viewpoint agrees with Madhani (2017) that

resource dependency links board members with critical external resources.

Stakeholder theory reflects on meeting the needs of all stakeholders. Some participants

stressed the significance of satisfying the needs of all stakeholders (P1, P4, P5, P8, & P9). The

participants concurred with the research notion that systematically attending to the demands and

needs of all stakeholders enhanced the organization's performance (Whitney & Thams, 2019).

Boards govern effectively when members understand and balance the interests of all stakeholders

(Squires & Elnahla, 2020). P6 and P7 disagreed with the research and proposed attempting to

fulfill the needs of all stakeholders, which caused alienation in the organization. Although

Whitney and Tham (2019) argued that fulfilling the needs of all stakeholders enhanced the

organization's performance, the research also proposed that it could alienate individuals when

leaders fail to balance the needs of stakeholders.

Stewardship theory focuses on organizational goals instead of self-interest; a form of

stewardship theory also emerged in the findings. Several participants believed that organizational

stewards comprise staff, including executive leadership and the board (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, & P9). P4 indicated, "The board, CEO, and staff are good stewards of the organization because of their commitment to achieving the goals and to the welfare of others." P4 viewpoint agrees with Keay's (2017) findings that good stewards of the organization commit to the welfare and growth of others. Boards working in a collectivist/organizational manner work towards the organizational ends (Keay, 2017).

Several participants concurred with the argument and noted that when the board worked collectively, the results improved organizational performance (P1, P2, P4, P5, P8, P9, & P10). P6 & P7 neglected to agree with the research or other participants because the boards failed to work collectively. P6 & P7 viewpoints substantiate Madhani's (2017) research that stewardship theory neglects to account for instances when the board failed to be good stewards. Keay's (2017) research proposed a drawback with the theory derived when boards invest too much time resolving problems and decision-making, a primary concern for participants 6 and 7.

Themes Discovered from the Board of Directors Interviews (Participants 11-20)

Emergent Theme 1: Actions that Hinder Success

Attendance influences the board's performance and can hinder success. P16 and P18 had not seen actions that impeded the board's success or governance. However, several participants expressed that members who failed to attend meetings regularly impeded the board's progress (P11, P13, P17, P19, & P20). P17 noted that the lack of attendance created additional work for members, which slowed down progress in achieving goals. P20 stated that individuals who neglected to communicate with the chair and members about attendance lacked participation. The literature does not support the findings about lack of attendance. However, P11 stated, "Board members must be active, present, and show up for meetings." P20 noted, "Failing to

attend monthly meetings hinders the board's progress and organization outcomes." Roshayani et al. (2018) posited that members who neglect to understand their obligations fail to engage in governance. Participation can promote synergy; however, the lack of members participating can impede the board's progress. P11 noted, "You can't just show up for a board meeting; you have to provide some valuable input that will help the board."

Emergent Theme 2: Governance

Bylaws depict how the board members operate and provide legally binding rules on how the organization will operate. Understanding the bylaws, policies, and procedures is part of the board's responsibilities. P11 stated, "Board members must understand the bylaws and governance to ensure the organization achieves the mission." P11 viewpoint substantiates the literature that defines governance as conditions and practices critical for achieving the mission and vision (Willems et al., 2017). P15 indicated, "To avoid being misconstrued, board members must be trained on bylaws, policies, and procedures and understand the chair's role and other board actions." P15 concurred with Roshayani et al.'s (2018) research that training and expertise can determine the board director's performance.

Emergent Theme 3: Chair Effects

The board chair's leadership affects governance and board members. P20 stated, "The board chair sets the tone and an example for the members." Many participants agreed with P20 and believed effective leadership starts at the top (P11-P20). P13 also noted, "Board members cannot fill their roles if the chair is not leading." Participants also concurred with Freiwirth's (2017) research that the board chair considerably influences the board's functioning (P11-P20). Additionally, several participants concurred with P13 and agreed, "The chair role is instrumental in board governance and requires an organized, articulate, and thorough individual" (P11, P12,

P14, P18, P19, & P20). However, the literature points out the chair's role as instrumental, with no qualifications identified for the board chair.

In contrast, P13 stated, "If they are negative, it's going to bleed into everything else because they are the leader." No evidence in the literature asserts that opposing chairs affect the board or organization. However, the literature points out that board chairs often have an unrealistic view of the board and its effect on governance (Freiwirth, 2017). P13 expressed, "Strong leaders will probably get much more done than passive." P12 agreed with P13, although no evidence in the literature supports the assessment. Still, the board chair does affect the organization, the executive leader, and the board's performance (Puyvelde et al., 2018).

Emergent Theme 4: Efficacy Elements

Efficacy elements of the board discovered in the findings included board experience, diverse skill sets, and training. P13 stated, "The lack of board experience is not a disqualifier, but it should not be mandatory." Many board members had more than five years of experience, even though they did not think the lack of experience affected the board (P11, P12, P13, P14, P17, P18, & P20). The participant's viewpoint contradicts Mason and Kim's (2020) that directors without governance experience impede the board's progress.

P13 also denoted, "This was my first board appointment, and I did not have experience." Seijts et al. (2019) research proposed that board chairs should select directors with character and experience. Many participants agreed with selecting individuals with character but believed the lack of experience did not hinder the board, nor should it deter members from selecting individuals without experience (P11, P12, P13, P14, P17, P18, & 20). P1 and P4 also noted, "We do have board orientation for new members, and we linked them up with a mentor."

The findings revealed diverse skill sets, which were also considered an efficacy element. Each participant believed diverse boards are more productive because of their various skill sets and talents (P11-P20). Participants concurred with Roshayani et al.'s (2018) research that diverse boards with expertise perform better. P12 expressed, "It is also best to look for individuals with the skill sets we may lack as a board."

P14 agreed with P12 but noted, "I do believe a board member may not use the same skill set on the board that they use on the job." However, P17 stated, "I do see a problem with people who are uncomfortable when they are not familiar with a specific, which is why members should use a familiar skill set." P17 agreed with Gazley and Nicholson-Crotty's (2018) research proposing that diverse boards are a quality for good governance.

Interpretation of the Themes

I discovered and interpreted several themes through the board director's transcript (See Table 2). Elements for efficacy is a theme discovered through the coding process. The coded data revealed that successful boards have directors with board experience who appear motivated and vested in the organization's mission. Successful boards also have members with diverse skill sets essential to the board. Board experience, motivation, investment, and diverse skill sets created efficacy in the board, enhancing effective governance. The board is responsible for identifying skill sets needed for effectiveness. Therefore, the board interview revealed that it determines the selection and recruitment of members based on their needs.

Actions that hinder success were another theme identified through the coding process (See Table 2). Board members who did not attend meetings regularly and were not engaged impeded the board's progress. The lack of attendance and engagement caused additional work for members, which slowed down progress in achieving goals. Individuals who failed to

communicate with the board chair and members about their attendance lacked engagement and participation. Evidence also revealed that board members not trained in board governance impeded the board's progress and lacked the necessary knowledge for the decision-making process and strategic planning.

Board chair effects were also a theme recognized through coding (See Table 2). The data revealed that the board chair's role affects governance and members. The data revealed that the chair was responsible for setting the tone and delegating responsibilities to the members, and effectiveness begins at the top with the chair. Strong board chairs created environments conducive to efficiency and effectiveness. Board chairs who set the tone, delegated responsibilities, and welcomed suggestions had productive boards. On the contrary, passive leaders who allowed aggressive behavior from the CEO or ED to set the board's tone struggled with effective board governance.

Governance was also a theme identified through the data and coding (Table 2). Board members who understood the organization's bylaws and their roles and responsibilities were more successful in board governance. The board members clearly and concisely understood the organization's mission and purpose. The members also ensured executive leaders performed critical functions, equipping leaders with the proper tools and resources. The board also integrated strong board practices, procedures, and policies to prevent the board from engaging in the organization's operations. The degree of separation also minimized internal and external issues with operations and governance. Evidence also revealed that nonprofit boards with members passionate about the organization and its mission perform better.

Four themes emerged through the CEO and ED's transcripts: a working board, efficacy elements, values that create positive outcomes, and theories contributing to success. The data

revealed that effective nonprofit organizations had working boards. Working boards comprised members who participated on a committee, created scorecards to grade engagement, and donated meaningful gifts to the organization. The meaningful gifts were contributions to the organization without a specific amount (See Table 1).

Efficacy elements were also a theme discovered in the CEO and ED transcripts (See Table 1). However, the elements differ from those of the board of directors. CEOs and EDs interviewed proposed that efficacy occurs when board members understand their roles and responsibilities and integrate board practices, such as strategic planning and financial and nonfinancial data monitoring. Efficacy was also evident when the board was diverse, advocated for the organization, and was aware of the vision and mission.

Values that created positive outcomes are also themes discovered through the transcripts of the CEO and ED (Table 1). Organizations with transparent leaders communicating regularly with the board had positive outcomes and success. Several CEOs and EDs considered the board a partner instead of the boss or overseer. This perspective also influenced positive outcomes and buy-in with the board. The CEO and ED contributions improved efficacy, allowing board efficiency and performance.

The final theme discovered through the CEO and ED transcripts was theories contributing to effective board governance (See Table 1). Although the leadership theories will appear later in the study results, resource dependency, servant leadership, stakeholder leadership, and stewardship emerged through the coding process. Nonprofit organizations with board members connected to external resources were more successful, which aligned with the resource dependency theory perspective. The same applies to organizations with servant leaders at the helm. Leaders who meet all stakeholders' needs and demands have adequate governance and

success. Furthermore, leaders acting in the organization's best interest had board support and sustainable organizations. I will further discuss the themes discovered from the coding process in the relationship section of the findings.

Representation and Visualization of the Data

Representation and visualization of the data include two tables: the themes and codes discovered through the executive leader's semi-structured interviews and the themes and codes discovered through the board directors' semi-structured interviews. The tables also include quotations from participants as they relate to the themes. The codes represent data identified during the coding process after aggregation and winnowing occurred. The data aggregated to shorten the list of codes and develop emergent themes because 37 codes emerged through the executive leader's transcript, and 29 codes emerged through the board directors' transcripts; Tables represented alleviating an extensive list and providing a general idea of discovering conducive to the research question.

Table 1
CEO/ED Themes and Codes

Themes	Codes	Examples of Quotations
Working board for effective governance	Scorecard, committees, engagement	"Yes, we have five standing committees: governance, executive, finance, development, and the program and services committee."
Efficiency elements for effective governance	Roles and responsibilities, board practices, diversity	"We do board orientation for new members and connect them with a mentor."
Values for effective governance	Communication, CEO/ED contributions	"One key to a good nonprofit is good open communication and a good relationship between the ED/CEO and the chair of the board."
Theories for effective governance	Resource Dependency, Stakeholder, Stewardship	"I need my board members to gather resources and contact those resources."

Table 2
Board Directors Codes and Themes

Themes	Codes	Examples of Quotations
Actions hindering governance	Attendance, participation, training	"Lack of participation hinders a board because you're tasking the same people over and over again."
Governance	Bylaws, policies and procedures, roles and responsibilities	"You must have a good strategic plan and board members who understand the bylaws and governance."
Chair effects on governance	A delegate, sets the tone, a strong leader	"I think it starts at the top; leadership sets the tone."
Board directors' efficacy for governance	Experience, motivation, skill sets, vested	"Areas where we lack experience, the board must search for individuals with diverse skill sets."

Table 3
Demographics

Questions	Total Responses	Percent
1. What is the nature of your organization's primary activities?	10	100%
a. Education	5	50%
b. Social of Legal Services	2	20%
c. Health Services	1	10%
d. Religious	1	10%
e. Other	1	10%
2. What are the main sources of funding for your organization?	10	100%
a. Charitable Contributions	3	30%
b. Federal, state, or local governments	4	40%
c. Grant-making public charities	3	30%
d. Foundations		
e. Other		
3. How many years has your organization been in existence? a. 5 or fewer	10	100%
b. Between 6 and 10		
c. Between 11 and 25	2	20%
d. Between 26 and 50	3	30%
e. Greater than 50	5	50%
4. What were your main motivations behind your decision to join the board of this organization (Select all that apply)	10	100%
a. To serve the organization and contribute to its success b. To contribute to society	9	90%
c. Because the organization asked me to join d. To advance my personal interests	1	10%
e. Other 5. What is the total number of nonprofit boards you serve on (including the one covered by this survey)	10	100%
a. 8	1	10%
b. 6	1	10%
c. 5	1	10%
d. 3	2	20%
e. 2	2	20%
f. 1	3	30%
6. What is the total number of for-profit organizations you serve on?	6	60%
a. 2	1	10%
b. 1	4	40%
c. 0	4	40%
7. Do you believe that serving on a nonprofit board opens up opportunities to serve on for-profit board?	10	100%
a. yes	9	90%
b. no	1	10%

Stanford University   *Board Survey*

Table 3 Continued
Structure of the Board

Questions	Total Responses	Percent
8. How many directors serve on the board of your organization?	10	100%
a. 15 or fewer	7	70%
b. Between 15 and 20	2	20%
c. Between 25 and 30	1	10%
d. Between 30 and 35		
e. Greater than 35		
9. In your opinion, is the present number of directors	10	10%
a. Much too large		
b. Slightly too large		
c. About the right number	5	50%
d. Slightly too small		
e. Much too small		
10. How well does the board understand the mission and strategy of the organization?	10	100%
a. Extremely well	2	20%
b. Very well	7	70%
c. Moderately well	1	10%
d. Slightly well		
e. Not at all well		
11. How well do the members of your board understand their obligations?	10	100%
a. Extremely well	2	20%
b. Very well	7	70%
c. Moderately well	1	10%
d. Slightly well		
e. Not at all well		
12. How experienced are the directors on your board based on the previous and current number of additional boards they serve on?	10	100%
a. Extremely experienced	1	10%
b. Very experienced	6	60%
c. Moderately experienced	3	30%
d. Slightly experienced		
e. Not at all experienced		

Stanford University   **Board Survey**

Table 3 Continued
Structure of the Board

Questions	Total Responses	Percent
13. How engaged are the directors on your board – based on the time they dedicate to your organization and reliability in fulfilling their obligations?	10	100%
a. Extremely engaged		
b. Very engaged	5	50%
c. Moderately engaged	4	40%
d. Slightly engaged	1	10%
e. Not at all engaged		
14. Does your board have a "board within a board?"	10	100%
a. yes	5	50%
b. No	5	50%
15. [If yes]: is this a formal "board within a board" (i.e., executive committee role) or an informal "board within a board" (i.e., it just happens)?	7	70%
a. Formal	5	50%
b. Informal	2	20%
16. Does this structure improve board functionality and decision-making?	9	90%
a. Yes	7	70%
b. No	2	20%
17. Does the board of your organization review data and information to evaluate the performance of the organization?	10	100%
a. Yes	10	100%
b. No		
18. Are these data financial or nonfinancial?	9	90%
a. Financial		
b. Nonfinancial		
c. Both	9	90%
19. How often does the board review the strategy of the organization?	10	100%
a. More frequently than annually?	1	10%
b. Annually	8	80%
c. Every two years	1	10%
d. Other		
e. Never		
f. I don't know		
20. How often does the board evaluate its own performance?	9	90%
a. Not sure	1	10%
b. Annually	5	50%
c. Semi-annually	1	10%
d. Monthly	1	10%
e. Never	1	10%

Stanford University   *Board Survey*

Table 3 Continued
Donations and Fundraising

Questions	Total Responses	Percent
21. Do you personally donate to your organization?	10	100%
a. Yes	10	100%
b. No		
22. Does your organization require that directors donate each year?	10	100%
a. Yes	8	80%
b. No	2	20%
23. [If yes] Does your organization have a "give or get" policy that requires each board member to donate a minimum amount each year or raise that amount from others?	10	100%
a. Yes	5	50%
b. No	5	50%
24. Are directors of your organization required to fundraise on behalf of the organization?	10	100%
a. Yes	5	50%
b. No	5	50%

Stanford University   *Board Survey*

Table 3 Continued
Organizational Performance

Questions	Total Responses	Percent
25. How satisfied are you with the performance of your organization?	10	100%
a. Very satisfied	4	40%
b. Moderately satisfied	5	50%
c. Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	1	10%
d. Moderately satisfied		
e. Very dissatisfied		
26. Which of the following problems or difficulties has your organization experienced in the last 10 years? (Select all that apply)	10	100%
a. Inability to meet fundraising targets	6	60%
b. Serious financial difficulty	1	10%
c. Extreme difficulty attracting one of more new board members	4	40%
d. Executive director asked by the board to leave	1	10%
e. Other **unexpected resignation of the ED**	1	10%

Stanford University   *Board Survey*

Relationship of the Findings

The Research Questions

I sought to answer three questions from the research proposal. The first question was how the board's roles and responsibilities impact internal operations. The second question was how the lack of board governance affects leadership and management roles. The third question was, what effect does the board chair's leadership have on board governance? I identified several sub-questions for two primary questions to ensure the results were conducive to the questions.

How do the Roles and Responsibilities of the Board Impact Internal Operations? To understand how the roles and responsibilities impact internal operations, I identified actions and behaviors of the board that contributed to the success and failure of board governance. The results revealed that board members who know their roles and understand their responsibilities are more impactful and have effective governance, allowing the CEO or ED to lead confidently. Attending meetings regularly and participating in board discussions contributed to successful governance, which assisted with internal operations. Board members trained and engaged in board governance enhanced the board's performance and the organizational efficiency among executive leaders and staff. Zollo et al. (2019) proposed that governance performance measures the organization's efficiency.

Although understanding roles and responsibilities, attending meetings, participating in discussions, training, and engagement assisted internal operations, the same factors can cause failure. Board members who failed to understand their roles and responsibilities hindered the board's and operations' progress. Evidence in research revealed that the board's responsibilities included strategy, policymaking, and stewardship (Zollo et al., 2019). This process created challenges for executive leaders responsible for operations, including the organization's day-to-

day business. Board members who became involved in the day-to-day business hindered internal operations. The findings also suggested that a lack of participation and engagement contributed to failure. Members who were not actively engaged or participated in the discussions could not contribute to the conversation. As such, results revealed that the individual did not provide any input or suggestions to assist the board in decision-making, which was also crucial for internal operations. Organizational leaders need constructive feedback from the board to operate the business, which requires engaging in conversations with the board.

How Does the Lack of Board Governance Affect Leadership and Management Roles? Answering this question required determining the primary challenges for leaders with inadequate boards. I sought to identify what elements were beneficial to ensure the success of organizational leaders. Two of the ten nonprofit leaders interviewed had board concerns regarding lack of governance. However, the concerns did not create challenges that impacted leadership roles.

Inadequate board governance caused potential challenges for organizational leaders including a lack of board support and loyalty to the leader and organization and a lack of clear and concise direction. The latter caused personal health issues with a participant, although the lack did not hinder the individual's responsibility as the organization's leader. Nahum and Carneli (2020) asserted that an inadequate board could change the organization's dynamics, disrupting programs, which can cause difficulties in receiving funding. However, the leader's commitment to the mission caused the individual to continue to fulfill their leadership role and responsibility, which helped alleviate potential funding issues.

The findings identified several elements beneficial for the leader's success, such as board experience, motivation, diverse skill sets, and vested members. Although board experience was

not essential, having members with previous knowledge who understood their roles and responsibilities minimized interference in the day-to-day business. Aware of their fiduciary role, board members were adamant about the leader's role and ensured boundaries existed. Strong board members ensured a degree of separation between the leader and board, and everyone had a clear and concise understanding of roles and responsibilities, which aligned with Zollo et al. (2019) proposing that board directors must under their roles and responsibilities.

The findings also revealed motivation and that members with specific skill sets assisted organizational leaders in their success. Board members who exhibited motivation were passionate about the organization and its mission. These individuals advocated for the cause, which assisted the leader with marketing efforts. Advocating also increased public awareness of the organization and potential funding opportunities. Having members with a specific skill set was an element that contributed to the leader's success. Boards that identified their needs and recruited individuals with skill sets also helped contribute to the organization's performance.

The members used their expertise for a particular task essential to the organization. For example, a board member who was a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) helped the organization with its' 990-tax form. Although the individual could complete the form, the suggestions provided ensured the document was accurate and benefited the leader. Another example was having a board member with a finance background. Members with that specific skill set assisted leaders with the organization's budget.

Another element identified through the findings that benefited leaders was having members vested in the organization's mission. Vested board members participated in conversations and fundraisers and worked on committees. The members regularly attended meetings because of their passion for the organization's mission and vision. This passion also

allowed internal and external stakeholders, including funders, to see board members vested in the organization. The perceptions and decisions of the board can impact relationships with internal and external stakeholders. The perceptions and decisions of the board can impact relationships with internal and external stakeholders. Vested members are critical for relationships (Puyvelde et al., 2018). The findings also revealed that participation on different committees, such as fundraising, human resources, finance, and marketing, showed that board members invest in the organizations.

What Effect Does the Board Chair Leadership Have on Board Governance? The findings revealed that the board chair sets the tone; therefore, the board leader chair has a pivotal role as the leader. Freiwirth (2017) noted that the board chair has influence; therefore, the position aligns with a gatekeeper. Board chairs who were committed to their role and had extensive knowledge about board governance enhanced the success of their executive leaders and the board. The knowledge assisted the board chair with delegation, developing goals, and planning the organization's strategic direction. The findings also revealed that board chairs who demonstrated characteristics conducive to servant leadership were more effective in leading. The leader exhibited strength, loyalty, transparency, and honesty in all facets of leadership. In addition, the findings revealed that board chairs attending meetings regularly and demonstrating organizational skills improved the board's performance. The board chairs who delegated responsibilities and provided constructive feedback to the board members also improved the board's efficacy.

However, the findings also revealed that passive board chairs had difficulties getting and keeping the board engaged. The board could not fulfill its role when the leader was not leading, and the individual allowed the CEO or ED to lead. Board chairs who did not commit their time

also affected the board's and organizational leaders' progress. The findings revealed an incident when the board chair neglected to attend meetings and exhibited a passive attitude. This passive attitude allowed the CEO to make decisions because the individual needed approval from the board. Therefore, the board chair positively or negatively affects board governance, which can impede the board's and the organization's progress.

The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework included a narrative of the study. The framework depicted and linked several elements, such as the actors, concepts, theories, and constructs that led to the outcome. Linking elements allowed an overview of the study's framework while revealing the relationship between the elements. This section will concisely include how each finding relates to the elements. Through the findings, several elements connected each actor to a concept, leadership theory, and construct.

The actors for this study comprised executive leaders, board chairs, board directors, and nonprofit organizations. Each actor was instrumental in board governance and essential to ensuring the organization's success. The study's executive leaders consisted of EDs and CEOs of nonprofit organizations. The findings revealed that EDs and CEOs oversee day-to-day operations and are at the helm of a nonprofit. Researchers proposed that executive leaders influence organizational results (Banzato & Sierra, 2016). The executive leaders in the study were adamant about effective communication and transparency with the staff, board chairs, and directors. Some executive leaders considered their relationship with the board a partnership and believed the two must co-exist to achieve the mission.

Another actor in the conceptual framework was the board chair. The findings suggested that board chairs must set the tone, be assertive, and integrate practical communication skills for

successful governance. Passive board chairs allowing executive leaders to dominate and control board meetings were ineffective in leading the board, which hindered governance. Effectiveness required the chair to ensure that board directors understood their roles and responsibilities to alleviate the potential of executive leaders overstepping their boundaries. Therefore, successful organizations had strong board chairs who were present, actively engaged, and attended board meetings regularly. However, researchers proposed that board chairs often have an unrealistic view of the board and its impact on governance (Freiwirth et al., 2018).

The board director was also an actor in the framework. The findings revealed that board directors are the governing body and have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure the organization complies with ethical and legal standards. Board success required members who were passionate about the mission and vision and willing to use their skill sets to enhance board efficiency. Although experience was optional for several organizations, board directors with experience and diverse skill sets were more proficient in governing.

The study was about board governance in nonprofits; therefore, nonprofit organizations were actors in the conceptual framework. I identified ten CEOs/EDs from several nonprofit organizations to interview for the study. The organizations differ in services provided and range from providing jobs for people with disabilities to assisting victims of sexual assault. Other services included affordable childcare, youth development, and connecting people to educational, social, and economic programs. The nonprofit organization was an essential actor in the framework because of the purpose of the study. Therefore, this actor relates to each element of the research. Without a nonprofit organization, research and study would be invalid.

The framework also comprised elements, such as three concepts; the first suggested that board training, expertise, and experience were related to board governance. The findings

revealed that board training was necessary for many organizations and ensured members understood their purpose and responsibility. Training also minimized conflict between members and the executive leaders about their roles. Although no findings on expertise emerged, board directors and executive leaders recruited members with specific skill sets, which was also critical to board governance. As mentioned, board experience was not a requirement but an advantage for board directors because of the knowledge. Therefore, board governance relates to board training, skill sets, and experience. The concept associated with stakeholder and resource dependency theory, which I will discuss later.

The second concept suggested that the relationship between the board chair and executive leader relates to the organization's functions. The findings revealed that the relationship was imperative for board governance and operations. To ensure a positive and open relationship, several executive leaders communicated weekly with the board chair by highlighting activities within the organization and providing a list of accomplishments for the week. In addition, the board chair and executive leader also met to share information before board meetings and to maintain transparency. Freiwirth et al. (2018) research posited that the board chair and executive leader were critical to the board's functioning.

Executive leaders with exceptional relationships with the board chair led more effectively, which helped the leaders in their roles. This result suggested that the board chair and executive leadership relate to the organization's function and essential for the effectiveness of board governance. Concept two also relates to several leadership theories: transformational and servant leadership. I discussed each theory later in this conceptual framework section of the findings.

The third concept pertained to governance and suggested that effective governance relates to the sustainability of internal operations. The findings revealed several elements that allowed boards to achieve board governance efficacy. Those elements included having a diverse board with different skill sets motivated and vested in the organization. Also, board members who engaged attended meetings regularly and participated in board discussions enhanced governance. Board chairs who set the tone and members who understood their roles and fiduciary responsibilities and were aware of the bylaws contributed to effective governance.

The findings also revealed that executive leaders played a pivotal role in board governance and the sustainability of internal operations by being transparent, prepared for board meetings, and integrating effective communications. However, executive leaders who lacked transparency and honesty hindered the board's progress. Leaders who neglected to communicate with the board chair and members also delayed the board's progress. Therefore, the sustainability of internal operations related to board governance requires specific elements. Concept three is also related to stewardship theory, which the researcher will discuss in the following section about theories. The conceptual framework included several leadership theories identified during the research and study. The theories included stakeholder, resource dependency, servant leadership, transformational leadership, and stewardship. The study revealed a correlation between each element in the framework and the organization's performance.

Stakeholder theory proposed that organizations had an obligation beyond fiscal responsibilities to ensure all stakeholders' needs and demands (Whitney & Thams, 2019). The findings revealed that board directors integrated stakeholder theory by ensuring the organization was achieving its fiscal responsibilities and adhering to the policies, procedures, and bylaws to avoid legal action. Board directors developed strategic plans to identify and define the

organization's vision and the objectives and goals for the future. Developing the strategic plans took three or five years. However, the board reviewed the plans annually to determine necessary changes. Strategic planning was a guideline for determining the organization's direction.

Resource dependency theory reflects board directors' access to critical external resources (Madhani, 2017). The findings revealed that successful organizations had board directors with connections to resources in the community. Some organizations intentionally recruited board members with access to individuals or other resources that helped the organization. The individual may not have personal finances to contribute but has access to critical resources to support. The findings revealed that resource dependency was not about financial access but the ability to connect to external resources vital to the organization's vision and growth.

The findings also revealed that servant leadership reflected on the executive leaders and the board chair working together. The theory suggested that leaders worked without focusing on power and authority but on achieving the organization's vision, which was the premise behind servant leadership (Pearse, 2017). The findings also revealed that communication, accountability, and empowering executive leaders contributed to successful board governance. Executive leaders who were transparent and communicated with the chair and board directors consistently contributed to the board's effectiveness. There were also instances when the board chair encouraged executive leaders and exemplified empathy during the pandemic. For example, the board chair and directors allowed an executive leader to reduce hours of operation because of COVID-19. This initiative created an environment that promoted the self-care and wellness of the staff, which increased productivity.

The study also revealed the transformational leadership theory. Transformational leadership allows leaders to motivate followers to accomplish goals and objectives (Xie, 2020).

The findings suggested that board chairs who were proactive, supportive, loyal, and confident motivated the board members to engage and participate in board meetings, which contributed to effective governance. Moreover, board chairs who were adamant about setting the tone, delegating, and monitoring board practices had more followers to commit to their roles. The study's results also revealed successful boards integrated the stewardship theory and suggested that board directors act in the organization's best interest. The research proposed that self-serving management impedes organizational growth (Keay, 2017). The findings suggested that board directors who lacked interest and became members only to enhance their resumes hindered board progress. However, board directors who invested, motivated, and had skill sets that improved the board's performance contributed to the success of board governance.

The conceptual framework constructs comprised board directors' performance, organizational performance, board chair performance, and executive leadership performance. Each construct relates to a leadership theory, concept, and actor. The findings revealed that the board director's performance in the first construct related to stakeholder and resource dependency theory and the first concept. The first concept indicated that board training, expertise, and experience relate to board governance. Trained Board directors with previous experience improved board governance and contributed to the board's overall efficacy, although there were no significant differences between members who lacked experience.

However, constructs two and three, organizational and board chair performance, relate to servant leadership. Concept two indicated that the board chair and executive leadership performance related to the organization's function. The study findings confirmed that the relationship between the executive leader and the board chair determined an organization's and the board chair's performance. Positive relationships between executive leaders and board chairs

allowed organizations to run more efficiently. Conversely, unresolved issues between executive leaders and the board chair created organizational problems and affected staff performance. Leaders lacking guidance and direction had problems achieving the strategic plan and organizational goals. Therefore, negative relationships between executive leaders and board chairs can affect performance.

Construct four, executive leadership performance, related to transformational leadership, and concept two, organizational performance. The findings revealed that executive leaders motivated staff to achieve the organization's goals and objectives. Staff who believed in the organization's core values and mission ensured the accomplishment of organizational goals. The executive leaders who regularly communicated with the staff and board were more successful in achieving the organizational goals. The conceptual framework illustrated a map of each element and its relationship. The map consisted of several actors, including executive leaders, board chairs, directors, and nonprofit organizations. In addition, concepts, leadership theories, and constructs appeared on the map, producing an outcome for effective board governance. The findings from this study confirmed a relationship between each element, and incorporating the elements assisted nonprofit boards in achieving successful board governance.

Anticipated Themes

My goal was to obtain the perspectives of the executive leaders and board directors that would identify themes related to successful governance. Several anticipated themes emerged during the study. The findings revealed themes from each group because there were two groups of participants: CEOs and EDs and board directors. The anticipated themes from the CEOs and EDs included the working board, elements for efficacy, values that create positive outcomes, and

theories that contribute to success. From the board directors, the themes were actions that hinder success, governance, chair effects, and elements for efficacy.

Nonprofit organizations with working boards were an anticipated theme. The findings from CEOs and EDs revealed that working boards were more effective in assisting the executive leader and the organization's performance. However, boards that lacked members who participated could hinder governance and the organization's success. Working boards comprised engaged members who participated on committees and completed scorecards on their performance. Board committees included executive, finance, marketing, governance, and bylaws. Created committees were for activities, such as an ad hoc meeting for strategic planning. Upon completion of the planning, the committee dissolved. Additionally, working board members contributed regularly to the organization, even those not requiring members to donate.

Board efficacy was also an anticipated theme with executive leaders. The findings revealed that CEOs and EDs believed specific elements assisted with the board's efficacy, such as having members who understood their roles and responsibilities, diversity, strategy and vision, and integration of board practices. Awareness of the board's roles and responsibilities minimized members overstepping their boundaries and getting involved in the daily operations. However, in the findings, an incident when several members became involved in an operations issue affecting staff impeded the board's progress. Those members involuntarily stepped down from the board.

Values that created positive outcomes were another anticipated theme with executive leaders. The findings revealed that the contributions of the CEOs and EDs and their partnership perspectives, communication, and transparency relate to the anticipated theme. Organizations with executive leaders who prepared for board meetings kept members abreast of the organization's progress, and integrated transparency improved performance and sustainability.

The communication between executive leaders and the board chair also enhanced productivity among staff, increasing efficiency. The findings confirmed that specific values created positive outcomes, an anticipated theme in the research study.

Leadership theories were an anticipated theme in the research study. The findings revealed that the theme relates to resource dependency, servant leadership, stakeholder, stewardship, and transformational. Although several theories were more dominant than others, organizations that integrated each leadership theory performed better. Organizations with board members who had access to critical external resources increased performance. In addition, organizations with board members who considered the needs and demands of internal and external stakeholders performed better. Furthermore, board members who were more concerned about the organization and not personal interest enhanced the board's governance.

Organizations that maintained consistency and sustainability had board members who understood their roles and responsibilities and empowered their executive leaders to make decisions. Leaders who motivated and encouraged their staff to accomplish objectives and focus on goals contributed to the organization's success. The findings also revealed that executive leaders who lacked empowerment and decision-making had difficulties achieving organizational goals and were less effective in their leadership positions. Therefore, the findings related to the anticipated theme of leadership theories.

Although several of the anticipated themes emerged in the findings, there were elements of the themes unanticipated, such as boards maintaining scorecards and meaningful gifts. Scorecards and meaningful gifts were elements found in the working board themes from the CEOs' and EDs' perspectives. Successful nonprofit boards use a scorecard to grade and monitor each member's performance. Sometimes, board members ask ineffective board members to leave

the board. Members who engaged, committed, and understood their roles and responsibilities remained on the board. A scorecard was a code identified in each group of participants under the working board theme.

Meaningful gifts were another element that was an unanticipated theme in the working board theme. The findings revealed how some boards did not require members to contribute a specific amount to the organization but to give a gift from the heart. The meaningful gift concept allowed members to donate any amount to the organization. Boards that utilized this concept received more participation and donations from members. The concept of meaningful gifts emerged from the perspectives of CEOs/EDs and board members. Therefore, meaningful gifts were in the working board theme and revealed in the coding process for each group of participants, CEO/EDs, and board members.

The Literature

The literature review provided an overview of the professional and academic scholarly resources that contributed to the research about nonprofit board governance. The literature also discussed effective business practices, research problems, practical theories, constructs, related studies, anticipated themes, and discovered themes. Many of the study findings revealed similarities with the research. However, the findings also identified some differences. The business practices discussed in the literature were governance and board oversight, strategic management, financial management, and board capital. The governance and board oversight research posited that nonprofit boards monitor the organization and executive director's performance (Mason & Kim, 2020). The findings from each group of participants revealed the purpose of nonprofit boards concerning responsibilities. Researchers proposed that board members' lack of training, experience, and expertise impedes board progress (Roshayani et al.,

2018). The findings revealed that productive boards comprised knowledgeable members who exhibited specific skills and had received board training. In addition, effective boards comprised actively engaged members who were passionate about the mission and participated on committees. All elements contributed to successful board governance.

Still, there was a lack of participation from board members who did not understand their roles and responsibilities. Unlike the literature suggested, the lack of experience and knowledge did not hinder the board (Mason & Kim, 2020). Members who previously served on the board were more experienced and ensured that governance was a priority. Understanding the board's fiduciary responsibility made members more effective and efficient. The findings also revealed a correlation between effective board governance and an organization's performance, as indicated in the literature (Mason & Kim, 2020). Boards that integrated orientation for new members and systematic support also exhibited efficient governance.

The literature also proposed that good governance requires CEO/EDs to have an excellent relationship with their board members, especially the chair (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016). The study findings revealed that specific values, such as partnership perspective, communication, and transparency, created positive outcomes for good governance. Board members who viewed their relationship with the CEO or ED as a partnership enhanced governance because of the executive leader's transparency and effective communication. The same sentiment relates to CEOs and EDs, who also viewed relationships with the board as a partnership. This analogy aligns with the literature review suggesting that CEO and ED transparency was a factor that influenced board members and governance (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016). The literature suggested strategic management as a business practice, which includes formulating strategy, monitoring strategy, and implementation (Dmitry et al., 2021). The findings identified practices that scholarly authors

proposed were critical to governance. Those findings included efficacy elements, such as board practices, strategy, and vision creation. The research proposed integrating strategic management processes to ensure the organization achieves its mission (Dmitry et al., 2021). This planning and financial management were board practices revealed in the study results that contributed to the board's effectiveness. Organizations with board members who intentionally incorporated business practices were able to accomplish their goals and achieve the vision and mission, which also helped to obtain a competitive advantage for additional grant funding. Strategic plans for many of the organizations in the study consisted of two to five years and included formulating strategy, monitoring strategy, and implementation.

However, boards that neglected to integrate business practices or failed to review and update strategic plans struggled to maintain members, lacked member participation, and had difficulties with financial management. The boards also had challenges recruiting experienced members and failed to maintain an adequate number of members. Researchers proposed that successful strategic planning requires integrating all aspects of strategic management (Santos et al., 2021). Effective and efficient financial management was a business practice revealed in the study results and literature that enhanced governance and the organization's success. The findings revealed that successful boards provided financial oversight, including planning and control, and were good stewards of the organization's finances. The board ensured executive leaders were not overspending and searched for opportunities to increase income. Board members viewed financials during board meetings, and members received updates on potential grants and fundraising possibilities. Boards with finance committees knowledgeable of financial competencies enhanced governance.

The financial competencies included accounting, financial planning, and management reserves. Each competency in the literature review proposed measuring the organizational and financial performance required knowledge of the competencies (Stühlinger, 2022). The findings revealed that board members with accounting, financial planning, and fundraising capabilities improved the organization's financial management. A positive relationship exists between financial management competencies and financial performance, according to Stühlinger (2022). The competencies related to the board's performance are positively associated with the organization's performance, as suggested in the literature. Organizations with financial management competencies performed better and had board members actively engaged in decision-making.

Conversely, the lack of financial management hindered organizational performance and fundraising abilities. Organizations neglecting to manage their finances struggled to maintain a competitive advantage and sustainability. The absence of board oversight required for effective governance affected board capital, which impeded access to external resources. Azevedo's (2022) research proposed that boards that fail to provide oversight critical to governance had low board capital, which restricts a board's ability to provide essential resources and identify opportunities for organizational growth and sustainability.

The Problem

The general problem addressed for this study was how the lack of effective board governance resulted in operating challenges. I sought to determine how governance affected nonprofit organizations in the Hampton Roads area. To assess the effect of governance on operations, I interviewed EDs and CEOs of nonprofits and a board of directors. Scholarly research proposed that a common complaint among EDs was board dysfunction (Freiwirth,

2017). Another concern was that underperforming boards impacted the organization and outcomes (Zollo et al., 2019).

Although researchers asserted that board dysfunction was a common complaint, the findings did not reveal dysfunctional boards (Freiwirth, 2017). The findings did show that board members who were unclear about their roles and responsibilities impeded effective governance, which hindered organizational growth. For example, board members who became involved in the organization's personnel issues were less likely to understand their role clearly. In several cases, these issues created problems with staff and the executive leader, so several members resigned involuntarily.

However, engaged board members who were fully clear about their responsibilities and roles and vested in the organization's mission-enhanced strategic direction. According to the survey results, 70% of the participants understood their mission and vision as board members (Table 3). Another finding in the results was that members trained and participating in committees aligned with their skill sets were more engaged and present during meetings. More than 50% of the participants were very engaged, and 40% were moderately engaged based on the time dedicated to the organization and reliability in fulfilling obligations (See Table 3). These members provided strategic insight and regularly donated resources to the organization. The survey results concluded that 80% of the participants donated to the organization (See Table 3). A partnership perspective existed, where the executive and board members did not view the relationship as an overseer but a partnership. This mentality empowered the executive leader in decision-making, although approval and advice were required for specific situations.

The findings showed that several organizations provided new board members with manuals that defined their roles and responsibilities, the organization's bylaws, policies and

procedures, and financial data. In addition, new members participated in extensive training and annual retreats for strategic planning. Each organization implementing this strategy had productive boards with engaged members and experienced organizational growth. The boards also had strong chairs who set the tone and delegated responsibilities. Another suggestion in the research was that incoherent board members impeded organizational outcomes (Jaskyte, 2018). The findings did not suggest that confused members affected the organization's growth. The executive leaders who experienced challenges with the board continued to have positive outcomes because of their passion for the organization's mission. Some executive leaders with board issues had members who had been on the board for more than ten years. This tenure did not affect the growth but slowed progress in achieving goals and adding new board members.

However, the findings did show that unengaged board members could lead the organization down the wrong path and negatively impact growth. Furthermore, members who lacked consistency and failed to attend meetings also slowed down the board's progress. A lack of proactive and forward-thinking was another issue that delayed progress and controversial members. In addition, the board's lack of vision could affect the board's growth. Although the findings did not identify board dysfunction or an incoherent board as a problem with the boards in Hampton Roads, the findings suggested that neglecting to have certain board aspects in place could result in operating challenges. Board members must know their roles and responsibilities, bylaws, and the organization's vision to ensure effective governance. The participants of this study did not allude to challenges impacting operations, only to the possibilities when board members fail to understand their fiduciary responsibilities.

Summary of the Findings

The study sought to determine whether board governance impacted an organization's operations. Twenty participants interviewed for the study included ten executive leaders, including CEOs and EDs of nonprofit organizations, and ten board directors. The executive leaders' interviews consisted of several questions about the effect of board governance on leading the organization and board practices that assisted the leader in accomplishing organizational goals. The board directors' questions were about identifying actions and behaviors that contribute to the success of the board and those actions that impede the board's success.

In addition to the interviews, board directors participated in an anonymous survey that asked questions about demographics, the structure of the board, donations and fundraising, and organizational performance—conducting board interviews and having participants complete a survey allowed for obtaining additional information that could answer the research question, which is the triangulation process. In addition, I could answer the sub-questions and determine whether the information supported me. After completing the research and conducting the study, I was able to address the problem, confirm the study's purpose, and provide responses to the research questions. From this information, key conclusions emerged.

The general problem addressed was the lack of effective board governance, which results in operating challenges. The study results revealed that board directors who understood their roles and responsibilities regularly attended board meetings and participated in discussions that contributed to effective board governance. Although board experience was not a requirement for any of the organizations, members who received board training were more engaged and participatory. Experienced board members ensured that boundaries existed between the board and executive leader and that individuals had clear and concise roles and responsibilities to

alleviate members' interference in the organization's daily operations. Furthermore, study results suggested that the lack of effective governance can create operation issues; however, executive leaders passionate about the organization's mission and vision did not allow board challenges to impact their leadership capabilities. Therefore, the organizations continued to progress even though the leaders believed there was a lack of support from the board. Two of the ten executive leaders interviewed had board concerns but continued fulfilling their leadership responsibilities, alleviating operational challenges. The findings also suggested that diverse skill sets, vested board members, and motivation to serve contributed to effective board governance.

The research includes determining the effects of ineffective board governance on operations by expanding the research to examine the driving factors that promote successful governance. The research also included studying the impact of the board chair's leadership on governance and examining elements that contributed to the success of executive leaders. Researchers proposed that board members with training and experience are more productive. Highly effective organizations have initiative-taking and interactive boards (Jaskyte, 2018). The findings confirmed that interactive and initiative-taking boards contributed to the organization's success; however, members who lacked experience were also productive, especially those motivated and passionate about the vision and serving. The lack of experience did not hinder proactive and engaged board members. Each organization trained new board members in governance.

Research linked board governance to organizational effectiveness (Zollo et al., 2019). The research questions were critical to addressing the problem. Therefore, the questions were to determine how the roles and responsibilities impact internal operations, how the lack of board governance affects executive leaders, and how the chairs affect governance. Based on the

findings, board members unclear about their roles and responsibilities can affect internal operations when no degree of separation exists. The board members involved in daily operations lacked knowledge, causing problems with the executive leader and staff. The findings confirmed the proposed research; members must know their roles and responsibilities (Zollo et al., 2019).

The findings also identified several board actions that contributed to governance success and failure. Some of those actions were previously addressed; however, they involved having proactive, interactive, and engaged members who were motivated and passionate about serving the organization. In addition, members who invested in the organization donated funds and participated in discussions. On the contrary, the same actions can contribute to the failure of board governance. Members who were not proactive, interactive, or engaged can impede the board's progress. Members who lacked passion and neglected to donate to the organization hindered progression. Additionally, members who did not invest in the organization and did not attend meetings regularly failed to contribute to the board's progress. The findings revealed that the same actions that contributed to success can also cause the failure of governance.

The findings revealed that the lack of board governance can positively or negatively influence leadership and management roles. However, executive leaders who understood their roles and responsibilities could fulfill their assignment as leaders. The primary challenge for leaders was the lack of board support, but this did not affect their leadership and the organization's achievement of its goals. The findings revealed that board support was a critical element to the overall organization's success, although, without support, passionate leaders continued to fulfill their roles. Researchers proposed that the board chair was the gatekeeper and set the tone (Freiwirth, 2017). The findings revealed that the board chair's role also affects governance. Leadership begins at the top, and board chairs are responsible for setting the tone,

delegating, monitoring, and integrating business practices, including strategic management. The research included the board chair's setting the organization's strategic direction, and the findings verified that information. In addition, stewardship theory emerged in the findings and positively affected the board's success. Another finding revealed that a passive board chair could not fulfill their role. The chair, who lacked initiative and demonstrated passive-aggressive behavior, had challenges leading the board. In addition, the chair, who failed to attend board meetings and neglected to demonstrate leadership skills, negatively affected governance. Time also emerged in the chair's effect—the chair, who neglected to dedicate time to the board and organization, negatively affected governance.

The completion of this research study presented several critical conclusions about the effect of board governance on operations. The primary conclusion was that the lack of effective board governance impacts operations. Through the NVivo coding process, the study results revealed several actions that can hinder the board's success. Board members neglecting to participate in meetings and a lack of training can slow down the board's progression. Additionally, unengaged members who are not vested in the organization hinder the board. Each of the elements identified can alter the executive leader's strategic direction, which impacts the organization's performance.

However, other vital conclusions emerged from the study that assisted board governance. The key conclusions emerged through NVivo coding and developed into themes, such as elements for efficacy, governance, and the board chair's effect. Effective boards comprised board members trained, motivated, and vested in the organization. According to the survey, 90% of the participants indicated that the primary motivation for joining the board was to serve the organization and contribute to its success (See Table 3).

Additional key conclusions included governance elements that contributed to the board's success. Members understood their fiduciary roles and responsibilities and were knowledgeable about the organization's mission, bylaws, and policies. Also, members did not get involved in the organization's daily operations and understood a degree of separation between the board's and executive leader's roles and responsibilities. Another key conclusion was that nonprofit organizations with solid board chairs who were proactive, engaged, present, and set the tone had highly productive boards. Board members donated to the organization and regularly reviewed financial and nonfinancial data. They also participated in the organization's strategic management process. More than 50% of the survey participants were satisfied with their organization's performance (See Table 3). The research findings revealed that ineffective board governance can impact an organization's performance. However, executive leaders with board challenges passionate about achieving the organization's mission continued to fulfill their roles and responsibilities to ensure the organization was not negatively affected. The executive leaders exhibited servant leadership and transformational leadership qualities, which enhanced their abilities to lead the organization successfully.

Application to Professional Practice

The purpose of creating nonprofit organizations was to solve problems or further a social cause to benefit society. In general, nonprofits exist to improve the quality of life for the community without seeking financial gain. Although the executive leaders are CEOs or EDs, the core consists of board directors with a fiduciary responsibility to the organization. The board ensured that executive leaders followed the strategic direction set by directors to achieve organizational goals.

Improving General Business Practice

The study findings revealed several general business practices for NPOs critical to effective board governance and executive leader performance. Efficacious board governance is necessary for survival, sustainability, and a competitive advantage. Board directors must consistently integrate process improvement to ensure business practices align with organizational goals and enhance the board, executive leader, and organization's performance. In addition to governance and oversight, strategic management, and financial management, the study identified board training and communication as business practices for NPOs.

The effect of board governance can determine an organization's and executive leader's performance. Board members must understand the organization's bylaws, policies, and procedures to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. Willems et al. (2017) considered governance as conditions and practices that allowed the organization to achieve its mission and vision. Diverse skill sets were an element of efficacy for productive boards and organizations to perform well. Although board members may not utilize the same skill set on the board as their occupation, research does propose that diverse boards perform better (Roshayani et al., 2018). Therefore, improving governance requires implementing board orientation to ensure members understand the organization's bylaws, policies, and procedures. Board chairs and members must intentionally recruit and search to attract individuals with diverse skill sets.

Strategic planning, a general business practice, sets the organization's and executive leader's direction (Dmitry et al., 2021). The findings revealed that several organizations had strategic plans but had not reviewed or evaluated those plans recently. This process may result from the pandemic; however, research suggests strategic planning comprised of formulation, monitoring, evaluation, and control (Dmitry et al., 2021). Accomplishing organizational goals

requires incorporating the entire strategic management process (Dmitry et al., 2021). Miller (2018) indicated that this business practice is critical to sustainability and success. Well-executed strategy plans that evolve rapidly can also assist an organization in sustainability.

Financial management, a general business practice in NPOs, requires board members to be fiscally responsible for the organization's financials. Board members have a fiduciary responsibility to the organization to manage the finances and maintain good records. Financial management also includes fundraising and board capital. The study results revealed that organizations that performed well had board members who understood their fiduciary responsibilities. The board created a finance sub-committee comprised of individuals with financial backgrounds and experience. Stühlingers (2022) proposed a positive relationship between financial competencies and an organization's performance. Many organizations incorporated financial competencies, such as accounting, budgeting, and management reserves.

Board training was a general business practice identified through the study results. Results revealed that training improved the board members' performance. Roshayani et al. (2018) asserted that board training determines a member's performance. New board members received orientation and information about the organization's bylaws, policies, and procedures. Researchers stated that boards must invest in training and development (Woodroof et al., 2021). Instituting board training can influence governance and the organization's performance.

Communication as a business practice creates positive outcomes for organizations. The board chair and executive leader's role requires adequate and consistent communication because their relationship ensures good governance (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016). Communication comprises transparency and keeping board members informed of operations and issues that impact the organization. The study results revealed that communication was the key to enhancing

relationships between the board and executive leaders. An excellent role-performance

relationship between the board and executive leaders impacts governance, the organization, and

executive leaders.

Potential Application Strategies

Leveraging the study findings requires identifying potential application strategies

beneficial for board governance. The findings revealed several elements that enhance board

governance. Perpetual board challenges can occur when organizational leaders fail to integrate

business practices critical for success and effectiveness. Tysaic (2018) asserted that recruiting

and training are areas essential for governance. Potential application strategies derived from the

findings included recruitment of board members, training of members, and communication.

Incorporating the application strategies can improve board governance and impact operations.

Board Recruitment

Recruiting board members with diverse skills can leverage the study findings. Board

members with diverse skill sets enhanced the board's performance. Members who intentionally

identified skill sets needed for the board search for individuals with attributes essential to

improving the board's performance. Tysaic (2018) proposed that the board must be clear in its

search for new members. New members must have skill sets the board lacks to build diversity.

The process can begin with members tapping into resources aligned with the board's mission.

For example, contacting law enforcement to become a board member can benefit an organization

that serves domestic violence victims. Roshayani et al. (2018) suggested that diverse boards with

expertise performed better. Recruitment must involve searching for members passionate about

the organization's mission and seeking board service (Tysaic, 2018).

Board Training

Implementation of training for new board members can also leverage the study findings. Trained board members understand their roles and responsibilities and refrain from engaging in operations. The degree of separation between the board and operations exists and alleviates interference. Trained members know the organization's bylaws, policies, and procedures, improving governance. Training requires new board member orientation and consistent training during the member's term (Tysaic, 2018). Organizations should provide new members with a binder that contains the organization's vision, mission, and the board's responsibilities and roles. The binder should include the organization's bylaws and strategic plan to depict the organization's direction and goals. Tysaic (2018) asserted that board members should understand the three duties of the organization. The duties include duty of care, loyalty, and obedience. The duty of care consists of being prepared and participating in board meetings. Proactive and interactive boards open to dialogue and discussion are highly effective (Jaskyte, 2018). Duty of care ensures members adhere to a specific standard of care for the organization.

The duty of loyalty for members assures that individuals put the organization's interest above themselves (Tysaic, 2018). The duty of loyalty aligns with stewardship theory, where members act in the organization's best interest (Keay, 2017). Board members who are passionate about the vision and serving have a duty of loyalty. To ensure this duty remains at the forefront, organizations institute conflict of interest policies that require members to disclose conflicts during their tenure. Finally, the duty of obedience exists to encourage members to be faithful to the organization and its mission (Tysaic, 2018). The members' responsibility involves complying with the laws and regulations for NPOs. Training new board members on each duty provides quality information that benefits governance. Continuous education for board members, such as

annual retreats, develops camaraderie among members and keeps everyone informed of their roles and responsibilities (Tysaic, 2018).

Communication Strategy

Developing a communication strategy can leverage the findings presented in the study. Effective communication promotes board and executive leader efficiency and improves the organization and executive leader's performance. Communication was the key to an engaged and productive board. Strong boards had executive leaders with open communication and good relationships with the board. Good governance derives from board members and executive leaders with excellent role-performance relationships (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016). Organizations with executive leaders consistently providing the chair and board with updates performed well. An effective communication strategy requires providing the chair and board with critical information about operations.

Summary of Application to Professional Practice

The study findings identified strategic management, financial management, board training, and communication as the fundamentals for improving general business practices. As stated, strategic management involves developing and implementing plans to assist an organization in achieving its goals and objectives. Although the process includes formulating and monitoring strategic plans, it also comprises evaluating and controlling them (Dmitry et al., 2021). Strategic management provides an organization with a roadmap to identifying and achieving. Strategic management allows an organization to meet its mandate and sustain public value.

Organizations must also integrate financial management processes for sustainability. Board members have a fiduciary responsibility to the organization; they should understand its

financial position and review the annual budget, IRS 990, and financial statements. Diverse boards include members with various skill sets who can provide subject matter expertise. Members with accounting and finance experience can assist the board with understanding the organization's financial position and help determine how to move forward and remain competitive.

As a business practice, board training provides extensive and valuable knowledge about members' roles and responsibilities, including the duty of care, loyalty, and obedience. The duty of care encourages members to be cautious about their responsibilities and integrate sound judgment. The duty of loyalty influences members to put the organization's interest before their own, which aligns with stewardship theory. Organizations that promote the duty of loyalty create a conflict-of-interest policy to help members remain loyal. The duty of obedience encourages members to be faithful to the organization and its mission. Communication was fundamental to successful governance and the relationship between executive leaders and the board. Executive leaders who were intentional and adamant about highlighting important operation matters had better relationships with the board and chair. Instituting a communication strategy can improve relationships with internal and external stakeholders, enhance transparency, and create a positive presence of the organization in the community.

Recommendations for Further Study

The primary purpose of this qualitative flexible study was to determine the effects of board governance on operations. Integrating purposive sampling allowed me to identify participants for the study. Triangulation includes multiple data collection methods, such as interviews and surveys (Rose & Johnson, 2020). The data collection methods allowed me to interview executive leaders (CEOs and EDs) and board directors of NPOs. The small sample size

allows researchers to investigate using quantitative methods and a larger sample size of participants. Based on the findings, areas requiring further research include the board's roles and responsibilities, the chair's effect on board governance, and efficacy elements necessary for effectiveness. Several participants could not identify actions that hindered the board's progress; therefore, further research should include determining what actions affect the board. Although no immediate or pending actions delayed the board's decision-making process, lack of attendance and failure to engage and participate in meetings could hinder the board's progress. Clarifying the board's roles, responsibilities, and obligations keeps members engaged (Roshayani et al., 2018). Expanding on those roles and responsibilities can provide additional insight into the actions that affect progress.

The chair sets the tone and direction for board governance; therefore, further research is necessary on the chair's effects on board governance (Freiwirth et al., 2018). Board chairs obligated the organization to establish the board's fiduciary responsibilities, but the literature did not identify the chair position as instrumental. The board chair has considerable influence but often an unrealistic view of the board's effect on governance (Freiwirth, 2017). Various factors can affect the chair's position and how the individual leads. Researchers can further explore the role of the board chair in identifying factors that impact performance.

The study revealed experience and diverse skill sets as efficacy elements necessary for board success. Although the lack of knowledge did not affect progress, experienced board members added value to the board. Researchers can expand on the effects of board experience and how it correlates to the member's performance. Investigating and examining board experience to pinpoint additional efficacy elements will allow researchers to determine other critical elements beneficial for board success. Finally, researchers can further explore why only

50% of board members were satisfied with the organization. Exploring this information can allow researchers to identify elements that substantiate board satisfaction.

Reflections

Completing the doctoral program has been rewarding, overwhelming, enlightening, and perplexing. From the coursework to the field study and writing up the results, I have experienced the loss of family, friends, and sorority sisters. I have transitioned from my home church, built by my ancestors in 1924 with 400 members, to a mega-church with over 3,000 members. In addition, I was still determining how to get participants for the study and was unfamiliar with the NVivo qualitative application, but I continued to press forward. Paul stated in Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this one thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Bible Gateway, NKJV). I am confident that God has kept me and allowed me to continue the journey. He has been the source of my strength. He has been my rock and fortress. He has been my waymaker. As a result, I have experienced personal and professional growth and have a better understanding of the Christian worldview.

Personal & Professional Growth

Jeremiah 29:11 states, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." God ordered my steps and knew where He would take me in life. I began my coursework in 2018; I took a year off in 2019 because my father, grandmother, and aunt went to be with the Lord. The same year, I transitioned from my home church, which is small (400 members), to a mega ministry (3,000 members), and it has been difficult trying to find my place. I know that "My gifts will make room for me and bring me before great men" (Bible Gateway, NKJV, Pro. 18:16). However, transitioning from a place I have known all my life to where I do not know anyone has been

traumatic. Nevertheless, I continued worshipping and praising God. After the time off in 2019, I began coursework again in 2020 and thoroughly enjoyed the entire learning process. I finally completed my coursework in 2022; it was time to move into the dissertation process. Initially, I was nervous because of the unknown.

Nonetheless, my passion for learning, NPOs, and God allowed me to push past the nervousness. I knew what nonprofit problem I wanted to explore; section 1 of the dissertation was not as tedious and overwhelming. I developed the research questions and a conceptual framework and identified the study's assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and foundation. I learned that the foundation provides the groundwork for building the dissertation. I knew what I wanted to explore, but I needed to realize that developing the foundation was critical to conducting the study. A weak foundation built on sand can fail, but a solid foundation built on the rock, God's word, will not move (Bible Gateway, NIV, Matt. 7:24-27). This perspective taught me that even during the challenging and questionable times of the research study, I had to stand firm and press forward.

Section 2 required the literature review, identifying participants, and the data collection process. Initially, I contacted a well-known community member to recruit a board, but that did not work. I knew what God had started; He would finish. I did not allow my first failed attempt to deter me. I also knew God had already identified executive leaders and a board for me to interview. Those individuals were always there awaiting me. For what I wanted to achieve, I needed to interview executive leaders of NPOs and board directors.

Within 30 days, I interviewed 20 people, 10 executive leaders (CEOs and EDs), and 10 board directors. Many leaders I never met were excited and willing to participate in the study. I learned two things: When God orchestrates a plan, He will bring it to fruition, and secondly, He

prepared the table in advance; the seat awaited me. Interviewing the study participants allowed me to learn more about some of the nonprofit organizations in the Hampton Roads area and connect to individuals I may not have ever met. The data collection process was the most rewarding.

Section 3, the presentation of the findings, was the most challenging because of data saturation, and I was unsure how to present them. The first submission to admin received a zero grade because it lacked a robust thematic analysis. I received constructive feedback and examples of what I needed to integrate into the document. I prayed and thought about what I needed to incorporate, then revised and resubmitted. This moment was gratifying and helped me analyze the study findings comprehensively. The entire process was instrumental to my personal and professional growth because I became stronger as an individual and broadened my connections in the community.

Biblical Perspective

Strategic Management

Keller (2012) described God's plan for work. The plan comprised the design of work, the dignity of work, work as cultivation, and work as service. Keller (2012) proposed that God's creation of the world was work, which comprised the formulation of the heavens and the earth, and the work design. Genesis 1:1 denotes, "God created the Heavens and the earth" (Bible Gateway, NIV). Throughout the bible, many examples of strategy exist. God used strategy to create the heavens and the earth (Bible Gateway, Gen. 1:1). Moses used strategy to lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt, "Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt" (Bible Gateway, NIV, Exo. 3:10). Joshua used strategy to lead the people of Israel into the Promised Land, "Moses My servant is dead.

Now, therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you this people, to the land which I am giving to them

– the children of Israel" (Bible Gateway, NIV, Jos. 1:2).

Nehemiah used strategy to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem, "Then I gave them my report:

"Face it: we're in a bad way here. Jerusalem is a wreck; its gates are burned up. Come – let's

build the wall of Jerusalem and not live with this disgrace any longer" (Bible Gateway, MSG,

Neh. 2:17). Finally, David used strategy to defeat Goliath, "So David prevailed over the

Philistine with a sling and a stone and struck the Philistine and killed him. However, there was

no sword in the hand of David" (Bible Gateway, NKJV, 1 Sam. 17:50). Each biblical figure

integrated a strategy to accomplish their mission. Therefore, strategic management comprises

strategy: formulating, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and controlling (Dmitry et al.,

2021). Neglecting to identify a strategic plan can cause organizations to fail and lose critical

funding. A well-crafted and executed strategy that evolves rapidly helps organizations remain

sustainable (Gamble et al., 2021). Although God is the strategy creator, each biblical figure

mentioned created a well-crafted and executed strategy to achieve the goals orchestrated by God.

Financial Management

Board directors are responsible for understanding the organization's financial position

and ensuring it adheres to business practices and IRS regulations (Piscitelli et al., 2020). This

responsibility includes reviewing the organization's tax form 990, monthly financial statements,

and annual budget. The board's role in financial management requires safeguarding the

organization's finances and ascertaining good financial stewardship. Financial stewardship in the

bible comprises money and all resources: time, people, and property. The board's fiduciary

responsibility aligns with God's expectations of Christians: to be good stewards of their

resources. 1 Corinthians 4:2 denotes, "Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found

faithful" (Bible Gateway, ESV). Being good stewards consists of faithfully giving resources, but it eliminates borrowing. The Bible states explicitly, "The Lord will open to you His treasury, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. And you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow" (Bible Gateway, ESV, Deu. 28:12). Financial management derived from biblical times and existed to ensure Christians maintain frugal with their resources and wise with spending.

Communications

Communication identified throughout the dissertation, including the literature review and data collection, as the key to transparency, trust, and the relationship between executive leaders and board directors. The research and results revealed that communication benefits board success (An, 2021). James talks specifically about effective communication and the importance of listening and being slow to speak, "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry" (Bible Gateway, NIV, Jam. 1:19). Effective communication requires listening, speaking, and transparency. Organizations perform better when executive leaders and board members communicate regularly and when leaders remain transparent. Proverbs 16:24 states, "Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones" (Bible Gateway, NIV). Being mindful of tone and mannerisms is essential in communication. Leaders must articulate with humbleness and compassion to ensure the delivery conveys the right message. In general, various biblical passages provide examples of communication that all Christians should integrate into their daily lives to remain obedient to God and His word.

Summary of Reflections

In summary, strategic management, financial management, and communication were business functions explored in the research study that derived from God's world creation. The beginning of strategic management was the first sign of strategy with the creation of "The heavens and the earth" (Bible Gateway, Gen. 1:1). God goes on for six additional days. His strategy was to create all that He could for humankind. The Bible has multiple stories about strategic plans to do God's will and work. Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah, and David were biblical figures who had strategic plans aligned with God's master plan, which illustrates the importance of developing a strategy for work and Christian life.

However, the strategy requires financial management. Integrating a strategic plan comprises understanding the organization's financial position. A strategic plan also identifies internal and external factors critical to achieving organizational goals. Without sound financial management, NPOs cannot survive or remain sustainable. The same can apply to the Christian walk. Neglecting to be frugal can affect being faithful not only in tithes and offerings but also in helping others, "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord" (Bible Gateway, NKJV, Lev. 27:30). Everything belongs to God, therefore, being frugal with resources allows Christians more opportunities to give and help others.

Providing for others includes effective communication. Like God communicating with Moses and others about His strategy, executive leaders and board directors must communicate. Successful NPOs have leaders who are strong communicators and transparent. In the Bible, God provides many examples of communicating His will and expectations for Christians and various leaders. This message indicates and solidifies the importance of communication in the workplace

and life. Neglecting to incorporate strategic management, financial management, and communication can impede personal, organizational, and spiritual growth.

Summary of Section 3

This qualitative study included exploring the effects of nonprofit board governance on operations to determine whether a lack of effective governance results in operational challenges. The literature suggests that underperforming boards can impact organizational outcomes and effectiveness (Zollo et al., 2019). To determine the impact of governance, the study revealed actions that contributed to success and failure. Some actions that hindered boards included lack of attendance at board meetings and failure to participate in discussions. Inadequately trained members or members who did not understand their roles and responsibilities also impeded the board's success. Passive board chairs, which allowed the executive leaders to facilitate and dominate meetings, negatively affected the board.

However, the same actions that hindered progress can benefit the board. Members who attend regular meetings, diverse and trained boards, engaged members, and those who understand their duties, roles, and bylaws all add value to governance, positively affecting the board's and organization's performance. Ascertaining the board chair's role was instrumental in the study because the chair sets the tone and often has an unrealistic view of the board. Although the literature did not support this viewpoint, the study findings identified the board chair's role as influential and the individual who sets the tone.

Subcommittees, board practices, effective communication, transparency, and leadership theories were additional elements that contributed to the board's success—standing or subcommittees comprised finance, governance, development, and executive. NPO boards with standing or subcommittees performed well and achieved their goals, positively impacting the

governance. The boards also had strategic and financial management processes to ensure they met the organizational goals and adhered to IRS regulations and its fiduciary responsibilities. This process required transparency and effective communication from executive leaders. Consistent communication between the board and executive leaders improved the organization and the leader's performance.

Communication was a general business practice instrumental to improving relationships between executive leaders. The literature supported the study's findings in identifying the relationship between the board chair and executive leader as crucial to successful governance (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016). Financial management, board training, and strategic planning were general business practices pinpointed for improvement. However, leveraging the study's findings requires incorporating application strategies such as recruitment, board training, and communication. Recruiting diverse board members with different skill sets added value to the board in addition to on-board and consecutive training. Effective board governance requires organizations to invest in training and development (Woodroof et al., 2021).

Similar to personal and professional growth, life requires constantly investing in yourself to grow, and the investment begins with developing a personal relationship with God and acknowledging Him as Lord and Savior. One must "Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead; you will be saved (Bible Gateway, Rom. 10:9, NKJV). The doctoral journey was rewarding and enlightening but also overwhelming and perplexing. However, God has always been the source of my strength during the overwhelming moments and days.

Learning how the business functions explored in the study related to God's will and divine creation brought an additional sense of hope and gratitude. The book of Ecclesiastes

states, "What has been again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun" (Bible Gateway, Ecclesiastes, 1:9, NIV). Each business function explored in the study was formulated during biblical times. God created strategy during His creation of heaven and earth (Bible Gateway, Gen. 1:2). Moses, Joshua, Daniel, and David also integrated a strategic plan to achieve their goals.

The Bible teaches Christians about the importance of financial management and being the lender, not the borrower, "The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from now" (Bible Gateway, Deu. 28:12, NIV). NPOs that perform well and have effective board governance are good stewards of their finances. Board members safeguard the organization's finances by reviewing financial statements and the budget and being fiscally responsible for the resources. Achieving each function would not be possible if the board and executive leader failed to communicate. Communication, a business function in the Bible, was vital to accomplishing goals. Although God communicated with many people throughout the Bible, the first sign of communication was during creation, "Let there be light, and there was light" (Bible Gateway, Gen. 1:3, NIV). This sign of communication began a business function that would carry on throughout history and become essential to sending and receiving information for achieving spiritual, personal, and organizational goals. Lastly, strategic planning, financial management, and communication are business functions for effective board governance and living a life with God.

Summary and Study Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine the effects of board governance on operations in nonprofit organizations. The study sample size included 20 participants comprised

of two groups: ten executive leaders (CEOs and EDs) and a board of directors with ten members in the Hampton Roads area. I integrated a constructivism approach using a conceptual framework, which allowed a better understanding of the participant's viewpoint and a thorough roadmap to link leadership theories and constructs conducive to the research question (Bogna et al., 2020). The research included triangulation by using two methods of data collection: semi-structured interviews and a confidential survey that contained encryption. The executive leaders had 37 codes, aggregated into four emergent themes: working board, efficacy elements, values that create positive outcomes, and theories that contribute to success.

The board of directors had 29 codes aggregated into four emergent themes: actions that hinder success, governance, chair effects, and efficacy elements. The study was relevant and identified areas to enhance the effectiveness of board governance. Board directors who lack knowledge of their roles and responsibilities can hinder progress. Therefore, instituting on-board training for new members, a communication strategy, strategy management, and financial management can help board directors achieve the organizational goals and improve their performance. Further research should include quantitative methods and comprehensive analysis to expand on the board's roles and responsibilities, chair effects, and efficacy elements necessary for effectiveness.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide for Board Directors

"The Perpetual Challenges of Nonprofit Board Governance and its Impact on Operations"

Time of Interview:	
Date:	
Place:	
Interviewer:	
Interviewee:	
Position of Interviewee:	
Recording/storing information about interview:	

Introduction:

☐ Introduction

☐ Purpose of the Study

☐ Informed Consent Signature

☐ Provide Structure for the Interview

☐ Ask if the interviewee has questions

☐ Define any terms necessary

Interview Content Questions:

1. **How many years of experience do you have on nonprofit boards? How long have you been on this board?**
   Probes: Tell me more.

2. **Can you identify the board director's actions and behaviors that contribute to the success of board governance and organizational performance?**
   Probes: Please explain.

3. **What actions and behaviors have you seen impede the board's progress?**
   Probes: Tell me more.

4. **Research suggests board chair leadership affects board governance. In what ways do you think the board chair leadership impacts governance?**
   Follow-up question:
   Can you provide some examples of when the chair leadership causes ineffective governance?
   Probes: Explain.

5. **What are some major challenges facing nonprofit board governance?**
   Probes: Explain

Closing Instructions:

☐ Thank the individual for participating

☐ Assure individual of confidentiality

☐ If needed, request further interviews

☐ If asked, comment on how interviewee will receive the results of the study

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Executive Directors/Chief Executive Officers

Time of Interview:	
Date:	
Place:	
Interviewer:	
Interviewee:	
Position of Interviewee:	
Recording/storing information about interview:	

Introduction:

☐ Introduction

☐ Purpose of the Study

☐ Informed Consent Signature

☐ Provide Structure for the Interview

☐ Ask if interviewee has questions

☐ Define any terms necessary

Interview Content Questions:

1. How does board governance affect your leadership in the organization?
Probes: Explain

2. What board practices assist you and organization leaders in accomplishing organizational goals?
Probes: Explain

3. What qualities, actions, or behaviors have you seen from the board chair that assist your performance?

4. In what ways does board governance impede the organization's performance?
Probes: Explain

5. What are some problems and issues leadership have experienced due to ineffective board governance?
Probe: Explain

6. What are some positive results in leadership and organizational performance as a result of effective board governance?

Closing Instructions:
☐ Thank the individual for participating

☐ Assure individual of confidentiality

☐ If needed, request further interviews

☐ If asked, comment on how interviewee will receive the results of the study

Appendix C: Nonprofit Board Director Survey

Demographic Information
1. What is the nature of your organization's primary activities?
   a. Education or research
   b. Social or legal services
   c. Health services
   d. Religious
   e. Other
2. What are the main sources of funding for your organization?
   a. Charitable Contributions
   b. Federal, state, or local governments
   c. Grant-making public charities
   d. Foundations
   e. Other
3. How many years has your organization been in existence?
   a. 5 or fewer
   b. Between 6 and 10
   c. Between 11 and 25
   d. Between 26 and 50
   e. Greater than 50
4. What were your main motivations behind your decision to join the board of this organization (Select all that apply)
   a. To serve the organization and contribute to its success
   b. To contribute to society
   c. Because the organization asked me to join
   d. To advance my personal interests
   e. Other
5. What is the total number of nonprofit boards you serve on (including the one covered by this survey)?
6. What is the total number of for-profit organizations you serve on?
7. Do you believe that serving on a nonprofit board opens up opportunities to serve on a for-profit board?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Structure of the Board
8. How many directors serve on the board of your organization?
   a. 15 or fewer
   b. Between 15 and 20
   c. Between 25 and 30
   d. Between 30 and 35
   e. Greater than 35
9. In your opinion, is the present number of directors
   a. Much too large
   b. Slightly too large
   c. About the right number

    d. Slightly too small

    e. Much too small

10. How well does the board understand the mission and strategy of the organization?

    a. Extremely well

    b. Very well

    c. Moderately well

    d. Slightly well

    e. Not at all well

    a. Disagreement

11. How well do the members of your board understand their obligations as directors

    a. Extremely well

    b. Very well

    c. Moderately well

    d. Slightly well

    e. Not at all well

12. How experienced are the directors on your board – based on the previous and current number of additional boards they serve on?

    a. Extremely experienced

    b. Very experienced

    c. Moderately experienced

    d. Slightly experienced

    e. Not at all experienced

13. How engaged are the directors on your board – based on the time they dedicate to your organization and reliability in fulfilling their obligations?

    a. Extremely engaged

    b. Very engaged

    c. Moderately engaged

    d. Slightly engaged

    e. Not at all engaged

14. Does your board have a "board within a board?"

    a. Yes

    b. No

15. [if yes]: Is this a formal "board within a board" (i.e., executive committee role) or an informal "board within a board" (i.e., it just happens)?

    a. Formal

    b. Informal

16. Does this structure improve board functionality and decision making?

    a. Yes

    b. No

17. Does the board of your organization review data and information to evaluate the performance of the organization?

    a. Yes

    b. No

18. Are these data financial or nonfinancial?

    a. Financial

    b. Nonfinancial

19. How often does the board review the strategy of the organization?
    a. More frequently than annually
    b. Annually
    c. Every two years
    d. Other
    e. Never
    f. I don't know
20. How often does the board evaluate its own performance?
    Donations and Fundraising
21. Do you personally donate to your organization?
    a. Yes
    b. No
22. Does your organization require that directors donate each year?
    a. Yes
    b. No
23. [if yes] Does your organization have a "give or get" policy that requires each board member to donate a minimum amount each year or raise that amount from others?
24. Are directors of your organization required to fundraise on behalf of the organization?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    Organizational Performance
25. How satisfied are you with the performance of your organization?
    a. Very satisfied
    b. Moderately satisfied
    c. Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
    d. Moderately satisfied
    e. Very Dissatisfied
26. Which of the following problems or difficulties has your organization experienced in the last 10 years? (Select all that apply)
    a. Inability to meet fundraising targets
    b. Serious financial difficulty
    c. Extreme difficulty attracting one or more new board members
    d. Executive director asked by the board to leave
    e. Unexpected resignation of the executive director
    f. Other_____